

# *Relief and Rehabilitation Network*

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*Network Paper 2*

**Responding to  
the 1991/92 Drought in Zambia:**

**The Programme to  
Prevent Malnutrition (PPM)**

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# Responding to the 1991/92 Drought in Zambia: The Programme to Prevent Malnutrition (PPM)

Derrina Mukupo<sup>1</sup>

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<b>Contents</b>		<b>Page</b>
1.	Introduction	1
2.	Organisational Structure of the Programme to Prevent Malnutrition	4
3.	The Operation of the PPM Distribution System	10
4.	Targeting and Intervention Type	13
5.	Variation in Implementation	17
6.	Monitoring	20
7.	Conclusions	21
	References	27
	Acronyms	28

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# **Responding to the 1991/92 Drought in Zambia, the Programme to Prevent Malnutrition (PPM)<sup>1</sup>**

## **1. Introduction**

As with the other countries in the Southern African region, Zambia experienced exceptionally low rainfall during the 1991-92 rains. The rains had started well in many areas of the country during October but halted in January - a key month for the cultivation of maize, the country's staple cereal. The southern half of the country was most affected including the traditional maize surplus areas of southern and eastern provinces. As a result, the impact of the drought on domestic cereal production was particularly severe, production for the subsequent marketing year was only 40% of the average for the previous three years. Total cereal import requirements (commercial and food aid) for the 1992-93 marketing year were approximately 1 million tonnes.

The drought came at a particularly difficult time for the country both economically and politically. The Zambian economy had been in recession for over a decade as a result of declining copper prices, the country's principal export, and economic mismanagement. A key agricultural sector policy of the government of the United Independence Party (UNIP) had been pan-territorial maize pricing and the provision of fertiliser subsidies which encouraged the cultivation of hybrid maize in areas distant from markets and in areas ecologically less suited to the crop. At the same time, the price of maize meal was held down in the interests of the large urban population (42% of the population live in urban areas) and the result was massive, and ultimately unsustainable subsidies to the food sector. The resources available to the civil service had declined and, without improvements in productivity, so had its effectiveness. The country had accumulated one of the highest per capita debt burdens in the region. Chronic deprivation in rural areas was reflected in high

rates of childhood malnutrition well above that of most other countries in the

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was edited by John Borton. Due to the late receipt of the paper, it was not possible for the author to check the alterations. Any errors arising from the editing process are therefore the responsibility of the RRN.

region.

In the first multi-party elections in October 1991, the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) won a landslide victory and embarked on a far reaching programme of reforms including a Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and the reform of the civil service. In the short term, such reforms threatened increased hardship and further reductions in the capacity of the government administrative machinery.

The new government was quick to recognise the severity of the situation. On 12th February 1992, President Chiluba declared southern, western and eastern provinces to be disaster affected and two weeks later widened the declaration to the national level, making Zambia the first country in the region to make a national declaration. A Drought Relief Task Force coordinated by the Minister of Agriculture formed interministerial sub-committees to develop the components of the overall response. It was decided that the bulk of the imported cereals would be fed directly into the commercial marketing system by a newly formed National Bulk Import Control Agency (NBICA) through the existing Zambia Cooperative Federation (ZCF), a former parastatal organisation with an extensive network of depots and personnel throughout the country.

In deciding how to manage the relief distribution component of the programme, the government was faced with difficult decisions concerning the extent to which it relied upon the administrative system inherited from the previous regime. In response to earlier, more localised food security problems, the administrative system had performed poorly. For instance, the relief programme implemented in 1987, though nowhere near the scale of the 1992-93 operation, was by most accounts ineffective. Maize had been channelled through the local government and UNIP structures. Favouritism had been widespread and many of those in greatest need had failed to receive any assistance (PPM, 1993b). The reform of the civil service had barely started and its capacity to effectively handle a large scale relief operation was in serious doubt.

### **Figure 1**

Moreover it was felt that the limited capacity and lack of credibility of the existing system might deter donors from contributing generously to the response. Although the electoral process for central government had been completed the previous year, local government elections were scheduled to be held during 1992 and the government was concerned that if the local government structures were too closely involved in administering the relief activities that relief assistance might be diverted and the programme become entangled in the politics of the electoral contest.

After consideration of the situation, the Cabinet decided that 10% of the total import requirements (implying 94,000 tonnes) would be allocated for use in the direct relief component of the overall response (ie. food-for-work, subsidised sales and free food distributions) but that this component would be handled not by the local government administration but by local and international NGOs working with decentralised committees. As far as possible this component would be apolitical and be kept separate from the government's administrative structures. To effect this radical departure from previous practice, a Programme to Prevent Malnutrition

(PPM) was set up. The principal components of the PPM were the National PPM - a policy body; the Programme Against Malnutrition (PAM) - a quasi-NGO set up to receive and allocate the food aid to be used in the programme; Area PPM Committees composed of representatives of the private and public sector and NGOs involved in the distributions within particular areas; and the NGOs themselves. The amounts eventually distributed through the PPM/NGO system were substantially greater than the amounts initially envisaged. Between May 1992 and May 1993, the system distributed just under 250,000 tonnes of maize in the southern half of the country largely through food-for-work programmes but also through food-for-sale programmes and free distributions. In addition, the PPM/NGO network distributed supplementary foods and 2,380 tonnes of seeds to assist agricultural recovery in the 26 areas.

By any standards this programme was a substantial achievement and reflects the high level of commitment and support to the programme by the international community, NGOs and those officials involved. Though NGOs have shouldered the responsibility for direct relief provision in many other emergency situations this has often been the result of the channelling decisions of donor organisations. What makes the Zambia case unique is that the policy decision to rely upon NGOs rather than the government's own agencies was taken by the government itself. This paper describes how the PPM system was set up and operated.

## **2. Organisational Structure of the Programme to Prevent Malnutrition**

Prior to the Cabinet decision to establish the PPM system, consultations had been held with representatives of UN agencies, notably the World Food Programme (WFP) and some of the local and international NGOs with a track record in relief programmes such as the Zambian Red Cross Society (ZRCS), Oxfam and World Vision International (WVI). The principal elements of the organisation of the direct relief programme emerged during these meetings. The government's desire to keep the direct relief programme apolitical and with a minimum of administrative interference from government led directly to the view that it would be necessary to create a separate structure outside any existing government ministries. This in turn led to the notion of having a network of NGOs taking responsibility for undertaking



the distributions within their areas in conjunction with Area Committees, the formation of the National PPM Committee to devise and oversee the programme and the establishment of an organisation to service the network on a daily basis.

### ***The National PPM Committee***

The National PPM Committee formed the point of contact between the government's policy-making structure, donors and implementing NGOs. This Committee convened every two weeks in Lusaka to plan the programme and review progress. Meetings were presided over by a full Cabinet Minister from Health or Agriculture and were attended by the NGOs from each of the implementation areas, donors, and representatives of the line ministries that had a role to play in the activities of the PPM. The idea was to adopt a holistic approach to drought relief by having all the involved parties meet together to discuss various topical issues and to map out policy. The ability of those involved in implementation to regularly discuss their problems in a committee chaired by senior members of the Cabinet was a very positive aspect of this arrangement. The Programme Against Malnutrition provided the secretariat to this committee and WFP Director of Operations the vice chairmanship.

At the meetings of the committee, all representatives of the Area Committees reported on progress being made in their areas and the problems being experienced. Potential solutions were deliberated on by the full committee. Anecdotal reports on the situation of the people and animals in the drought affected areas were verified with the representative of NGOs. Later when the CSO Drought Impact Monitoring System (DIMS) began operation, its results were discussed with the NGOs and action points agreed on. The National PPM Committee also served as a check on the performance and actions of individual NGOs by obliging them to discuss progress in the presence of their peers. Where substantial deviations from agreed guidelines became apparent these would be discussed with the NGO in the presence of the full committee.

### ***The Programme Against Malnutrition (PAM)***

The Programme Against Malnutrition was a specially created NGO which became operational in April/May 1992. As a locally registered NGO, it had a governing board which was made up of prominent Zambian leaders of varied political affiliations. The Chairman was a well-respected businessman who was formerly a Minister of Health within the previous government. PAM received substantial support from WFP. Its offices were located within the same building as WFP and in the initial period before PAM acquired its own vehicles, WFP provided logistical support. PAM served as the secretariat to the National PPM meetings. The close links with WFP facilitated the tracking of food aid consignments entering the country and being transported to the Area PPM committees and the coordination of the funding mechanisms for the internal transport costs with the actual physical movement of the consignments.

### ***The Area PPM Committees***

PAM, with the help of the NGOs involved in the initial consultation meetings made an inventory of the various NGOs that were already operating within the areas most affected by the drought. These turned out to be mainly churches or church-related organisations running medical facilities and involved in various welfare activities, some development agencies and several international NGOs. All types of organisation were included in the inventory and the process of setting up a distribution structure. The area worst affected by the drought was then subdivided into 26 operational areas, based on Hospital catchment areas. The areas did not necessarily coincide with any existing administrative boundaries but basically tried to demarcate the areas according to ease of coordination from one location. Hospital catchment areas were used because of the initial suggestion that a District Medical Officer should chair the area PPM Committee. This suggestion which was intended to give the government a link to the work of the Area PPM Committees and ensure some kind of public accountability, was later vetoed by the National PPM Committee as not being true to the spirit of minimising the government's involvement in the relief operation. However, Area PPMs had the option of

retaining District Medical Officers as chairmen, if they chose, and many of them did.

For each of the 26 areas, the better established NGO assumed overall responsibility for coordination of relief work in the area on behalf of the National PPM. The lead NGO also represented the area on the National PPM Committee although other NGOs within the same area were free to attend National meetings, and many of them did. The lead NGO for each of the 26 areas is shown in Table 1 and Figure 2.

**Table 1**  
**Original PPM Area Committees**

<b>Area Number</b>	<b>PPM Name</b>	<b>Lead NGO</b>
01	Lukulu	Catholic Church
02	Kalabo	Yuka Mission Hospital
03	Mongu	Mongu Nutrition Group
04	Senanga	Sioma Mission Hospital
05	Kaoma	Mangango Mission Hospital
06	Luampa	Luampa Mission Hospital
07	Sichili	Sichili Mission Hospital
08	Katima Mulilo	Yeta Hospital
09	Mwandi	Mwandi Mission Hospital
10	Mumbwa	Nangoma Health Centre
11	Namwala	Namwala Parish
12	Macha	Macha Mission Hospital
13	Choma/Kalomo	Red Cross
14	Livingstone	Livingstone Hospital

15	Kabwe Rural	Development Aid from People to People (DAPP)
16	Mazabuka/Chikankata	Salvation Army
17	Monze	Monze Diocese
18	Gwembe Valley	World Vision International
19	Kafue Gorge	Riverside Development Agency
20	Mpanshya/Lusaka Rural	Lusaka Arch Diocese
21	Serenje	Christian Council of Zambia
22	Petauke/Nyimba	Lutheran World Federation
23	Katete	St Francis Mission Hospital
24	Chipata	Reformed Church of Zambia
25	Chadiza	Mwami Mission Hospital
26	Lundazi/Chama	Oxfam

The first task of the lead NGO was to bring together a group of volunteers from within the area who would be ultimately responsible for decision-making at the area level. This group was referred to as the Area PPM Committee.

**Figure 2**

According to the PPM guidelines, Area PPM Committees were intended to reflect the social composition of the area to maintain their representativeness and balance. Membership to the Area PPM Committee was voluntary without any remuneration. Most Area PPM Committees included the District Agricultural Extension Office, the District Water Engineer, local religious leaders, teachers and other influential community representatives.

The specific functions of the Area PPM Committees were to:

- Establish guidelines for food distributions in the area;
- Further demarcate the area into operational zones to be the responsibility of identified NGOs and other organisations;
- Review and monitor area food distributions;
- Decide on local disciplinary measures within the general PPM guidelines for dealing with members or NGOs not conforming to the decisions of the Area PPM.

In order to ease the burden on the lead NGO and to facilitate full coverage of the population within the area, the PPM encouraged more than one NGO to be involved. Where appropriate, additional NGOs were therefore given responsibility for programme implementation in particular sub-areas. The Area PPM Committee structure was replicated for these sub-areas so that ultimately, at each level, it was a group of local people that was responsible for decision making, rather than the NGO operating on its own. The sub-committees were responsible for selecting projects to be undertaken through the food-for-work schemes and proved a

valuable resource in identifying beneficiaries for the free food distribution component. Representation on these committees was normally by election.

### **3. The Operation of the PPM Distribution System**

At the beginning of the relief operation, it was agreed that 10% of all imported maize would be distributed through the PPM/NGO system, but as noted earlier the amount eventually distributed was closer to 25% of the one million tonnes imported by mid-1993. The initial figure was boosted by WFP channelling 55,000 metric tonnes from its emergency programme through the PPM system. Apart from physical quantities of maize, the PPM also received an equivalent share of the counterpart funds raised through the sale of food aid through commercial channels. These funds were used to cover the transport costs of the PPM operation.

Virtually all the maize distributed through the PPM system was yellow maize imported from outside the Southern African region. Yellow maize was less popular on the local market and sold for a lower price. In one case, in the eastern province, PAM purchased locally available white maize for distribution within the province when movement of imported maize became difficult. Imported maize destined for Zambia entered the Southern African region at the ports of Dar-es-Salaam (Tanzania), Beira (Mozambique) and Durban, East London, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town (South Africa). From the ports to Zambia consignments were transported by rail. From the point of entry into Zambia, all maize was handled by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (MAFF) through the Zambia Cooperative Federation (ZCF) and Cooperative Unions as the buying and selling agents. These had depots in each of the affected districts, and sometimes at the sub-district level. MAFF instructed ZCF and the Cooperative Unions to ensure that all the depots in the drought affected areas had a constant supply of maize for sale as well as for NGOs to draw from upon authorization by PAM.

In most cases, only the lead NGO for each of the 26 areas dealt directly with PAM when requesting a maize allocation to the area. Consequently, where several NGOs

and organisations were involved within a particular area, it was the responsibility of the lead NGO to collate the needs of all the other organisations. This greatly reduced the total number of transactions to be processed at the central level. At the outset, each lead NGO in consultation with Area and sub-Area PPM Committees and other NGOs in their area compiled a list of all the ZCF and Cooperative Union depots in the area detailing their location, capacity and stocks of maize. These lists were used by PAM to inform ZCF on the depots that needed to be stocked as well as which ones the NGOs would be drawing from. It was important that NGOs kept up this flow of information to PAM on their drawing intentions to PAM in order to minimise the disruptions in their distributions.

Once allocations had been approved, special vouchers were issued by PAM, countersigned by WFP, authorizing the lead NGO to draw an agreed quantity of maize from a specified depot for distribution. At first, many ZCF and Cooperative Union depot managers were reluctant to accept a system based on vouchers and PAM and ZCF staff had to work hard to explain the new system. With experience PAM found it preferable to issue several vouchers for smaller quantities in the place of single vouchers for large amounts so that the NGO could leave the maize in the ZCF depot until it was required. The lead NGO then either handed over the voucher(s) to the other NGOs within its area according to their needs, or drew maize on their behalf. Until the NGO presented the voucher to draw the maize, it was stored as part of the government stocks in the ZCF depots. Thus NGOs were saved some of the storage costs and costs arising from spoilage of maize whilst it was held in the depots.

From the district depots the PPM/NGO network was responsible for transporting and distributing maize to the affected communities. The Internal Transport, Storage and Handling (ITSH) costs incurred by NGOs were covered by 'ITSH cheques' issued by PAM. Initially, the ITSH costs were covered for all drawings by NGOs but subsequently maize that was drawn for use in the food-for-sale programme was excluded and NGOs expected to cover the costs from the income arising from the sales. PAM also provided tractors and trailers to areas that had difficulties either in hiring transport or obtaining transport that was appropriate for the terrain in their area. In all, 34 tractors and trailers were supplied. The goal was to move maize as

close as possible to the people who needed it, in order to prevent them from leaving their communities in search of food.

One of the initial tasks of the Area PPMs was to identify suitable storage facilities at the community level. This was usually arranged with local depots of the Cooperative Unions which were fairly widespread in some areas. In other areas, whatever facilities were available were used while identification of more suitable facilities was carried out. Such facilities included schools, church buildings, community centres or under-utilized government buildings. The Area PPMs arranged for security and management of these stores using the ITSH funds provided by PAM. PAM also supplied NGOs with tarpaulins in order to protect maize from the 1992-93 rains, both in transit and in the stores.

Distributions of maize through the PPM system began in June 1992, though the amounts involved only became substantial at the beginning of September when the system became fully operational in most areas.

### **Figure 3**



Distributions continued at a level around 30,000 tonnes/month for each of the seven months between September 1992 and March 1993 (see Figure 3) when the relief distributions began winding down and formally ended in June 1993 when a Post-Drought Recovery Programme commenced.

#### **4. Targeting and Intervention Type**

Little information was available on the numbers of people requiring assistance in each area through either the local government or the Social Welfare Committees previously operated by the Ministry of Community Development and Social Welfare, the latter having become inoperative. The creation of PPM Areas based in many cases on hospital catchment areas rather than existing administrative boundaries added to the problem. Initial estimates by the Ministry of Agriculture and a WFP/FAO assessment mission indicated a total of around 1.7 million people requiring relief assistance within the drought affected area. However, this figure was not disaggregated to a level where it could be operationally useful to the PPM and so assessments had to be undertaken. In May 1992, PAM nutritionists and food aid monitors began training the Area PPMs and NGOs in how to conduct Community and Family Needs Assessment.

The Community Assessments aimed at establishing the number of households in a village/community, the general food supply situation and the capacity of the majority of households to purchase food if available in the local area. They were conducted through interviews with a selected sample of community representatives. On the basis of these assessments the Area PPMs would decide on the type of programme to be implemented in the area, ie. food-for-sale, food-for-work, or free distribution. In addition, the assessments helped identify the appropriate time for the interventions to commence. Where community self-help initiatives were underway, the intention was to time the interventions so as not to undercut such

initiatives. Family Needs Assessments were conducted in many areas by the NGOs. These assessments included questions on the availability of family members to participate in food-for-work schemes as well as their access to food.

The PPM system employed three different types of intervention: food-for-sale, food-for-work and free distribution. So as to ease the demanding process of beneficiary selection, emphasis was placed on the first two types as these were effectively self-targeting forms of assistance and in line with the self-help beliefs of the new government. One consequence of this approach and the decentralised nature of the PPM was the difficulty of controlling the overall number of recipients. Final figures on the total number of recipients of the PPM indicate that more than 2.5 million people received assistance from the various programmes.

### ***Food-for-sale***

This type of intervention eventually accounted for 13% of the maize distributed through the PPM system. The Community Assessments showed that many people still had money to buy food for a number of months even though they had lost their crops. If food could be made available close to their villages at a reasonable price their cash reserves could be made more effective. From July until October 1992, many NGOs were selling significant amounts of maize in this way - moving maize from the main depot into or close to the village and selling the maize at the depot price. Occasionally, some NGOs sold the maize at prices below the depot price. Funds raised through the sales were used to fund other aspects of the relief programme.

### ***Food-for-work***

This was the principal type of intervention, eventually accounting for 76% of the maize distributions. Though some areas began food-for-work schemes at the outset, others phased them in over time, particularly after October when household cash reserves were completely exhausted and the food-for-sale component phased down. Area PPM Committees, local community leaders and NGOs selected the

types of project that would be beneficial to the communities and the schemes were open to all those who were prepared to work. The ration was the same as that for the free distributions, ie. 500 grammes of maize/person/day. No differentiation was made in the case of FFW participants as it was felt this would have created additional administrative difficulties and potential confusion when the priority was to ensure the rapid movement of food to the affected areas. The principal types of activity undertaken were:

- The rehabilitation of roads, schools and health centres;
- Well deepening and canal clearing;
- The construction of bridges, dip tanks for livestock, fish ponds, storage sheds and latrines;
- Tree planting, irrigation and the cultivation of own fields.

Though productivity was not always high, the fact that the projects were benefiting the communities and, in the case of the cultivation of own fields, individual households, meant that the level of commitment was much greater than if the activities had been imposed from outside the community. The food-for-work component of the PPM encountered considerable criticism, often from politicians seeking to gain from criticising the programme. A common criticism was that people should be given food free as had happened under the previous government and that FFW amounted 'to a form of slavery'. In response, the President, members of the new government, and the donor community expressed their support to the programme, making the point that the FFW projects were similar to self-help schemes, enabling people to retain their dignity and improve their communities rather than wait for free food handouts.

### ***Free Distribution***

For those who were unable to buy food and who were unable to participate in the FFW, free food was available and this intervention eventually accounted for 10% of the PPM maize distributions, equivalent to about 2.5% of the total maize imports into the country. The majority of recipients of free food distributions were the

elderly, the sick, handicapped and female-headed households with children below working age. The process by which recipients were selected varied widely. In many areas local leaders were asked to identify those who should qualify whilst in other areas committees were formed to make the selection. In all cases the NGOs and the Area and sub-Area PPM Committees were advised to encourage everyone who was fit and able to participate in the FFW.

The ration size for the free distribution and food-for-work components were set at 500 grammes of maize/person/day by the National PPM after a review of internationally established guidelines provided by WFP and the Red Cross. This ration was seen as being satisfactory to meet the calorie requirements when applied to each individual member of the family regardless of age, though because it was not 'balanced' in most areas by oils and pulses or by groundnuts, it lacked certain important nutrients. Adherence to the standard ration varied slightly between areas, principally as a result of the difficulty of ensuring precise measurement. The impression within PAM was that, if anything the NGOs tended to round up rather than down.

In parallel to the PPM system a supplementary feeding programme aimed at children under five years of age was implemented by the Food Management Unit of the Ministry of Health with the support of WFP. This programme had been in operation for several years prior to the drought but was expanded during the drought. It involved the distribution of a locally produced High Energy Protein Supplement (HEPS - made from maize meal, cooked soya, sugar and milk) beans, vegetable oil and other commodities to district hospitals and then through the rural health centre network. Though it was expanded considerably, the programme could not meet all the additional demands created by the drought. Particular difficulties were encountered in: expanding production of the HEPS; the concentration of donors on the provision of maize rather than commodities such as vegetable oil and beans limited the availability of the required commodities; and the poor performance of the distribution system from hospitals to the rural health centres. Though NGOs in the affected areas often stepped in to assist with the distribution of the food for the supplementary feeding programme, this did not form part of the PPM system and so is not discussed in detail here.

## **5. Variation in Implementation**

As a decentralised system there was inevitably considerable variation in the implementation of the PPM activities. Within the guidelines set by the National PPM and PAM, each area had a free hand in deciding on how best to implement the policy. Area PPMs decided on the types of projects to be undertaken as part of the food-for-work schemes, how often the payments were to be made to the participants and in some cases devised their own criteria for choosing the beneficiaries of the free food distributions, though a format for the latter was eventually developed at the national level and NGOs were asked to use it. Such decisions took into account the overall resources available for carrying out the activities in a particular way. For example, the availability of supervisory capacity was often a key factor determining whether an NGO used the food-for-work option in distributing relief food.

The following cases of the way the programme was implemented at the Area and sub-Area level illustrate such variations.

### **Choma/Kalomo PPM Area 13 (Zambia Red Cross Society)**

This area was the hardest hit by the drought but paradoxically was very slow in starting its relief operations. Though the Area PPM decided on the overall policies, the management of the programme was undertaken by the ZRCS. The ZRCS had a long history in organizing relief activities and had considerably better access to other resources such as Red Cross delegates provided through the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Geneva, two trucks, and in addition received vegetable oil and beans from the EC. However, it initially attempted to approach the operation in a manner that was arguably overly professional - endeavouring to assess the situation thoroughly and train volunteers prior to the start of the relief programme. This resulted in a delayed start to the programme. Though first distributions began in some parts of the area in

September, it was not until November that the whole area was covered. In addition, the ZRCS was reluctant to undertake food-for-sale interventions since this was felt to be contrary to its mandate. Instead it concentrated on food-for-work with some free distribution to deserving recipients. However, other NGOs operating within the same area as the ZRCS but without similar organizational obligations engaged in selling maize at depot prices.

### **Macha PPM Area 12 (Macha Mission Hospital)**

Macha was one of the first areas to set up its relief activities which were centered around the mission hospital run by the Brethren In Christ Church. The hospital had previously been involved in food-for-work programmes supplied by WFP. Its programme was almost exclusively maize-for-sale and food-for-work. The PPM undertook a wide range of food-for-work projects designed to address long-standing needs in the area such as construction of a shelter for a hammermill, brick-making (a combination of food and cash for work), the repair of feeder-roads and a canal serving the hospital and working in own fields during the planting season. Macha PPM encouraged mothers to bring their small children to the food-for-work sites and the mothers took turns to prepare a high energy meal for the young ones on-site. Growth monitoring and nutritional promotion was also conducted at some of these sites. Macha PPM allowed the community to decide who among them was really destitute, unable to take part in food-for-work and needing to be included in the free food distributions. The numbers selected for the free food distributions were very limited.

### **Chingombe Subcommittee of Lusaka Rural/Mpanshya PPM, Area 20 (Lusaka Archdiocese)**

The Lusaka Archdiocese had been running a mission station in this Luangwa Valley area for many years. The area is a chronically food insecure area even in years of

above average rainfall, in part because it is in a game management area, and because it is remote from markets and basic services. Basket-making is an important source of extra income but there are few outlets. The Area PPM decided that the situation in the area was already acute and the first food distribution in the area was free. In part this decision was influenced by the history of food being distributed free to needy families by the mission. The Area PPM also accepted baskets as part payment for the maize and later transported the baskets to the town markets. They also accepted slightly lower payment for the maize-for-sale component when it was introduced. Chingombe had one of the highest proportions of the population receiving free food distributions and found it difficult to switch completely to food for work.

## **6. Monitoring**

NGOs reported inadequate supplies of maize in their local depots using a simple reporting format the 'Maize Shortage Report' which were sent to MAFF and the information passed on to ZCF. In cases of urgent need where ZCF was unable to resupply the depot quickly, PAM sometimes arranged to transport maize on ZCF's behalf using alternative means. In addition to the shortage report, members of the general public, members of Parliament and anyone with information about the general food situations in particular areas were encouraged to bring information to PAM for action. For monitoring general progress, the basic monitoring tool was the National PPM Committee meetings every two weeks in Lusaka. All areas were obliged to bring a report on their area to the committee describing progress, problems encountered and additional requirements. The Committee meetings were the quickest method for obtaining information from the areas and proved invaluable to the PPM operation. Area PPMs also held similar meetings in their areas for the same purpose. To supplement this effort, PAM regularly sent nutritionists to each area at least once a month to check on progress and conduct necessary orientation. These trips also served to verify reports from the areas. The trips continued throughout the relief programme.

Even though the maintenance of nutritional status was a central objective of PPM,

it was recognized from the outset as a difficult objective to achieve as maize formed only one part of the complex matrix of factors determining nutritional status. Because PPM was designed only to handle maize distributions it had no control over the availability of other commodities nor over other important determinants of nutritional status such as disease and care of the young children. As already noted the provision of supplementary rations to young children was the responsibility of the Ministry of Health through the expansion of an existing distribution system. PPM's monitoring therefore concentrated on assessing households' access to maize rather than monitoring the health outcomes. Nevertheless, PPM Committees were always alerted to take note of malnutrition levels as recorded by their local health facilities. This information was used to direct the parallel programme on supplementary feeding.

The Government's Central Statistical Office (CSO) also undertook monitoring of the impact of the drought in the southern half of the country. From this exercise, a monthly report was generated on a wide variety of indicators, including the status of under-five children and the progress of relief food distributions. The information was used to plan the relief operation in the later dates of the drought. After the drought, the monitoring system changed emphasis to include other vulnerability indicators and is now a permanently established system.

## **7. Conclusions**

### *Achievements*

Despite not having been formally evaluated it is readily apparent that the PPM represented a substantial achievement in distributing almost 250,000 tonnes of maize to over 2.5 million recipients in a timely manner. There were no substantiated reports of deaths due to starvation although unrepresentative health centres data appeared to show increased malnutrition incidences of diseases related to nutrient deficiencies such as pellagra. The degree of collaboration among donors, government and NGOs was remarkable. Zambia was fortunate in that most of its



requirement for food were met by the international community. This was assisted by an early declaration of the disaster and appeal for assistance by the new government. Subsequently, the demonstration by the PPM that substantial resources could be distributed in an accountable manner probably contributed to the generosity of the response.

The PPM system for distributing food was welcomed by both government and beneficiaries. The general feeling was that people were given a better chance to get access to the food than was ever possible under previous systems. Available local resources were harnessed for the programme and duplication of efforts was minimised. NGOs working in the same area who had never previously discussed their work with each other had a forum for information sharing in the Area PPMs. Within each Area PPM the involvement of a range of representatives of different sections of the community in decision-making increased the chances of meeting the needs of the whole community.

As a channel for communication and the identification of needs in particular areas, the PPM was very effective and it was used to communicate urgent community needs even though they may not have been directly related to food distribution, such as when an Army Worm infestation was reported from one area in December 1992. Constant feedback through the system allowed for necessary modification to the programme to address new needs.

NGOs and other organisations working within the PPM had an unusual advantage of participating in a national system without drastically altering their established mode of operation. Flexibility was encouraged to tailor the programme to local needs. Bureaucracy was reduced to a minimum in order to allow for speedy implementation. At the beginning, government structures below the national level were deliberately sidelined to allow for this. Individual government officers wishing to serve on various Area PPM Committees were free to do so in an individual capacity, though it should be pointed out that some PPMs were wholly run by government officers as individuals.

The PPM benefitted immeasurably from the political support from the Cabinet and

from the President's Office. Such support was crucial to overcoming the political problems that were encountered, as well as allowing NGOs to participate in policy-making aspects of the programme. The National PPM Committee was the only non-governmental committee chaired by a full Cabinet Minister. Another measure of the PPM's success may be seen in the unwillingness of the government to disband it once the drought had ended, allowing it to continue implementing the Post-Drought Recovery Programme and extending the PPM network to the northern areas of the country where NGOs were present.

### *Problems Encountered*

The capacity for programme monitoring at the area and community levels was constrained by lack of personnel and transport. The skills necessary for monitoring food aid were not available equally between NGOs and aspects of the programme may have suffered as a result. An example was the limited accounting capacity within many NGOs which resulted in the delayed submission of reports on maize and money accounts.

The sidelining of the government structure at the local level presented problems for some Area PPM Committees. Resentment was usually expressed in the form of apathy in assisting the programme by certain government officers and occasionally through interference by politicians in the work of the PPMs. Despite efforts by Cabinet Ministers and the PAM to forestall political difficulties these still surfaced in many areas. After the local government elections, attempts by local politicians to influence the allocation of maize declined but in some cases were replaced by newly elected local representatives wanting to take-over the running of what for many was the only successful programme in their areas. Fortunately, the commitment of central government to keep the non-partisan stance of the PPM was maintained throughout.

The FFW activities often suffered from a lack of technical capacity in the planning and supervision of the schemes. PAM attempted to increase such capacity in some areas through WFP but many projects did not leave durable structures. During the

post drought recovery phase, PAM received support from USAID via UNICEF to provide technical support to the NGOs in the field of project planning and management, monitoring and evaluation, agricultural extension, crop storage technology and nutrition.

The logistics arrangements for distributing the maize at the Area PPM level presented a major challenge for many of the NGOs. In some areas, it was virtually impossible to hire transport from the commercial sector, either because there was none available within the area or because the terrain to be covered discouraged potential contractors. Feeder roads in most rural areas were either non-existent or very poorly maintained resulting in delays in food deliveries in some areas and incomplete coverage in others.

### *Lessons Learned*

Within each locality there is a wealth of resources that can be utilized for a clearly identified purpose such as disaster relief administration. There is however a need for such resources to be properly coordinated. PPM managed to locate local NGOs in most areas to take charge of the programme without needing to look to new NGOs to start up in the areas.

The PPM clearly demonstrated that substantial amounts of relief food can be distributed through rapidly assembled mechanisms without having to rely on free food interventions. Emergency food aid can be a valuable resource to be used by communities to carry out tasks of benefit to the community in a way that is neither demeaning and leaves the community at the end of the programme with a sense of pride in their achievement.

The use of more than one self-targeting mechanism can substantially ease the burden on local level personnel and volunteers. The PPMs substantial use of food-for-sale and food for-work left only the free food recipients to be screened by the administrators. Such targeting need not necessarily compromise the objective of reaching the most deserving individuals.

Flexibility is important to a programme relying substantially on voluntary efforts. The flexibility of allowing each Area/NGO to operate within the confines of its regular programme helped the overall implementation of the PPM programme. There was also plenty of room for modifying policy during the programme. This was done at the National PPM meetings which all interested parties attended. Flexibility was also evident in the government structure, allowing for quick access to influential people in the government for urgent problems to be addressed.

Constant consultations with the key actors at all levels of programme design and implementation are crucial. If people are expected to be fully involved in the implementation they should also be fully involved in the earlier stages of the programme. When this is not possible they must be thoroughly informed of the procedures and their consent obtained and, if they have any serious objections, these should be taken account of.

It is important for information concerning a relief programme to be as transparent as possible. Information should be made available to potential critics such as the press and elected local representatives as well as those involved in the planning and implementation of the programme. These groups should be helped in understanding the programme's objectives and methods of implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Such openness helps in both resource mobilization and in reducing misunderstanding.

Standardization of rations and general approach in different areas helped in dealing with the complaints among beneficiaries in different areas. Even though many would have preferred to receive more than the basic maize ration, it was much easier to overcome misgivings since the programme was uniform.

The need for keeping some kind of baseline information on the areas even in a crisis situation is important. This could be done by a separate institution from the one organizing relief, or by contracting consultants. This is important for later programme monitoring and for evaluating the impact of the relief programme.

Training for those involved in programme implementation at all levels should be as

thorough as possible. Ideally training should be an on-going activity throughout the relief effort.

Contrary to the popular belief that food-for-work exploited women it would appear that the female participants in the FFW enjoyed improved access to inputs for their cultivation activities through group work and the provision of seeds, thereby enabling them to increase their production.

### *The Future*

After careful consultation between government, WFP and involved NGOs, including PAM, it has been decided to maintain the structure of PPM to address food security and nutrition issues. Whereas the drought and the immediate crop shortage has passed, the effects of the drought will take longer to redress. In Zambia there are pockets of chronically food insecure areas even in the best of years. People in these areas have always relied partly on food relief from government and charitable organizations. Part of the problem has been the unsuitability of certain crops, particularly hybrid maize, to the ecology of these areas. Redressing such issues will take longer than one good rain season.

There are also other developmental problems that may not be related to drought but are nevertheless highlighted by it. Such problems include the high levels of child malnutrition and poverty which is common in rural areas. The PPM structure and the network of NGOs involved in it provide a good basis for addressing some of these problems at least in the short run and avoiding some of the pitfalls that hindered the relief effort.

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## Acronyms

CSO	Government's Central Statistical Office
DIMS	Drought Impact Monitoring System
FFW	Food-for-work
HEPS	High Energy Protein Supplement
ITSH	Internal Transport, Storage and Handling
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
MMD	Movement for Multiparty Democracy
NBICA	National Bulk Import Control Agency
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PAM	Programme Against Malnutrition
PPM	Programme to Prevent Malnutrition
RRN	Relief and Rehabilitation Network
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
UN	United Nations

UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIP	United Independence Party
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme
WVI	World Vision International
ZCF	Zambia Cooperative Federation
ZRCS	Zambian Red Cross Society



## **Relief and Rehabilitation Network**

The objective of the Relief and Rehabilitation Network (RRN) is to facilitate the exchange of professional information and experience between the personnel of NGOs and other agencies involved in the provision of relief and rehabilitation assistance. Members of the Network are either nominated by their agency or may apply on an individual basis. Each year, RRN members receive four mailings in either English or French. A Newsletter and Network Papers are mailed to members every March and September and 'State of the Art' Reviews on topics in the relief and rehabilitation field every June and December. In addition, RRN members are able to obtain advice on technical and operational problems they are facing from the RRN staff in London. A modest charge is made for membership with rates varying in the case of agency-nominated members depending on the type of agency.

The RRN is operated by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in conjunction with the European Association of Non-Governmental Organisations for Food Aid and Emergency Relief (EuronAid). ODI is an independent centre for development research and a forum for policy discussion on issues affecting economic relations between the North and South and social and economic policies within developing countries. EuronAid provides logistics and financing services to NGOs using EC food aid in their relief and development programmes. It has 25 member agencies and four with observer status. Its offices are located in the Hague.

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