



ZOA POLICY ON LIVELIHOODS AND FOOD SECURITY

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1 PURPOSE AND RATIONALE

Since 1990, the percentages of people living in extreme poverty and hunger have significantly reduced. However, the gaps between the poor and the better-off have widened and one in five people in developing regions still live on less than 1.25 USD a day. In those regions, malnourishment rates of almost 13% persist. Moreover, because of increased frequencies and scales of conflicts, extreme climate events, degradation of valuable natural resources and rapid population growth, many people risk slipping back into poverty and hunger.

ZOA's policy on Livelihoods (LH) and Food Security (FS) provides the framework of ZOA's programmes aimed to help conflict or disaster affected people, in particular the poorest and most vulnerable, to: 1) create sustainable opportunities and engage in activities toward better living conditions and/or 2) create and embark on sustainable opportunities to meet their food consumption needs.

ZOA's mission is to support those who suffer because of violent conflicts and natural disasters in fragile regions. We have a long-term commitment, enabling and obliging us to ensure that people, especially the poorest and most vulnerable, participate in activities toward sustainable livelihoods and food security, accounting for the many risk factors they live with.

The policy on LH/FS applies to all ZOA operations, both in disaster response and rehabilitation. The policy is directed primarily towards ZOA staff members engaged in programme design, management, monitoring and evaluation, as well as ZOA-affiliated internal or external consultants, trainers and programme support staff.

This document fully recognizes the need for the policy to be adapted to the specific circumstances of the different countries and areas in which ZOA works.

This policy does not examine the quality requirements of staff engaged in LH/FS, nor provides detailed operational guidelines and complete lists of possible activities. As a framework paper, it is limited to providing definitions, scopes of action, main objectives and indicators, quality criteria and main strategies.

2 KEY PRINCIPLES AND APPROACHES¹

All general principles and approaches as laid down in ZOA's Strategic Plan (Signs of Hope 2015-2018) also apply to the ZOA policy on LH/FS.

- Inclusion. LH/FS programmes² target individuals, households, groups and communities so that no one is left behind. ZOA recognizes that specific support is often needed for marginalized communities and for the poorest and most vulnerable households or individuals, including child/teen-mothers, people with disabilities, non-assisted elderly people, divorced and abandoned women, widows/female headed households and households dealing with chronic diseases. This support is provided so as to ensure that the poorest and most vulnerable households or individuals can effectively participate in LH/FS programmes. In all LH/FS programmes, ZOA puts special emphasis on the inclusion of women and on strengthening their position within the communities.
- Ownership. The design of LH/FS programmes is based on a good understanding of the targeted people, their needs, opportunities, capacities and preferences. The institutional and socio-political context is accounted for properly, including formal and informal leadership and groups, government rules and regulations, national and international support mechanisms, commodity and food markets, employment opportunities and security issues. ZOA's LH/FS programmes ensure that existing capacities are maximally used and further strengthened, that opportunities are effectively embarked upon, that activities are co-decided and co-implemented by the targeted people, and that programme outputs have tangible positive effects on people's LH/FS situation.
- Accountability and transparency. Objectives and expected outputs of LH/FS programmes are clearly communicated to the targeted people, activities agreed upon and planned with them, and roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder agreed upon. Mechanisms are established for the engagement of the targeted people in the monitoring of progress, for regular evaluations of activities and outputs, and for fine-tuning strategies and activities. Moreover, effective feedback and complaint mechanisms are set-up and consistently followed through.
- Sustainability. Results of LH/FS programmes will be sustained when they are positively perceived by the targeted population (tangible positive impact on people's LH/FS), when activities leading to these results can be adapted to changing environments (including climate change, markets and socio-political changes), when they are supported by policy makers and local leadership, and when they have a positive effect on social cohesion and on the natural environment.
- Do-no-harm. LH/FS programmes are designed so as to avoid fuelling existing tensions or creating new ones. Conflict analyses are therefore conducted to ensure that the design is conflict sensitive. Of particular importance is that the programmes are not perceived as biased in favour, or against, certain groups or political parties, that markets are not disturbed and that the programmes do not undermine local capacities and efforts.

LH/FS programmes will be designed and implemented so as to:

- Include large numbers of people as efficiently as possible. ZOA works in contexts where many people are affected by conflicts or disasters. Therefore, the programmes are designed to address the needs of as many people as possible, as efficiently as possible, while laying sound foundations for sustainable livelihood development. Exceptions are programmes which aim to develop and test specific innovations.
- Comply with recognized quality criteria. For all programmes, the Core Humanitarian Standards apply. For some LH/FS interventions, such as food, cash and voucher transfers, the Sphere standards apply. This is also true for interventions aimed to support market development, income and employment. Additional or ZOA-specific criteria are included in section 3.2.3.

¹ For theoretical backgrounds, see:

- UNICEF: conceptual framework undernutrition. <http://www.unicef.org/nutrition/training/2.5/2.html>
- FAO: introduction to the basic concepts of Food Security. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/al936e/al936e00.pdf>
- USAID: Livelihood and Food Security conceptual framework. <http://theliftproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Livelihood-and-Food-Security-Conceptual-Framework.pdf>
- DFID: s Sustainable Livelihoods Approach and its Framework. http://www.glopp.ch/B7/en/multimedia/B7_1_pdf2.pdf

² The word "programme" used in this document may also refer to component (s) of multisector programmes, area programmes, etc.

3 KEY OBJECTIVES

3.1 OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of ZOA's LH/FS programmes depends on whether the focus is on interventions within the realm of food security (objective I) or in the wider domain of livelihoods (objective II).

OBJECTIVE I For Food Security programmes, the overall objective is reduced hunger and malnutrition among households and individuals in the targeted area.

ZOA's standard outcome indicator:

During the programme period, the % of households with a Food Consumption Score (FCS) >35 has increased from x% (baseline value) to y%, disaggregated for male and female headed households (see annex 1 for reference to guidelines).

Theory of Change: *If households do... /... implement... /... are enabled to...>> (depending on the expected results of the programme), then the quality of their daily food uptake improves without negatively affecting the quantity of consumed food, whereby it is assumed that: a) households diversify their food consumption only when their access to staple food is sufficient or at least improving and b) in the targeted geographic area, a strong positive relationship exists between the FCS and the diversity of consumed food.*

Evaluation indicator 1: The prevalence and duration of periods of acute malnutrition among children <5 years and pregnant & lactating women in the targeted geographic areas has decreased.

Evaluation indicator 2: The Reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI) of x% of the targeted households has reduced by y points, disaggregated for male and female headed households (see annex 1 for reference to guidelines).

Theory of Change: *If households do... /... implement... / are enabled to..... (depending on the expected results of the programme), the quantity of consumed preferred food increases durably, whereby it is assumed that a) negative coping mechanisms considered in the rCSI are not leading to (negative) habits in the long term and b) in the targeted geographic areas, the use of rCSI also gives an indication of chronic food shortages.*

OBJECTIVE II For Livelihood programmes, the overall objective is that the basic social, economic and physical needs of all households and individuals in the targeted area are met and that they use strategies and means for ensuring sustainable access to food, income and basic services.

ZOA's standard outcome indicator:

During the programme period, x% of the targeted households have increased their cash spending on basic services (transport, drinking water, primary health care and basic education) by y%, disaggregated for male and female headed households.

Theory of Change: *When households are enabled to increase their income they will also increase their spending on basic services, whereby it is assumed that in the targeted geographic area the vast majority of the heads of households spend most of the available household money remaining after the purchase of food, on services which are deemed most urgent by the majority of the household members.*

Evaluation indicator: During the programme period, in the targeted geographic area the value of productive and non-productive household assets has increased by x%, on average (disaggregated for male and female headed households).

Theory of Change: *If households spend more on non-food items and services, they accumulate both productive and non-productive assets, whereby it is assumed that they will invest capital in developing relevant livelihood activities and that they will buy items which make the lives of the household members more comfortable.*

3.2 HOW TO ACHIEVE THESE OBJECTIVES

3.2.1. Scope of action in keeping with ZOA's strategic plan 2015 – 2018, ZOA's LH/FS programmes focus on four areas:

- **Income generating activities (IGA).** ZOA supports IGA, covering a wide range of economic activities aimed to improve the living conditions of poor households and individuals. This may be the production of goods or services—including commerce— or a combination of both, in rural as well as urban areas, such as small business, cooperative undertakings, job creation and professional skill training schemes, and credit and saving groups. Example interventions of ZOA are: vocational skills training, facilitation of apprenticeships, group based business development and saving and loan schemes. In both disaster response and early recovery settings, ZOA may provide cash or vouchers and start-up capital for group based and individual businesses. ZOA does not provide loans or credits itself and does not focus on niche-type activities of which relatively few people benefit. ZOA recognizes that the poorest and most vulnerable people need more and often different kinds of IGA support than others and ZOA's IGA activities are designed to enable all disaster or conflict affected people to effectively participate in, and benefit from, the programmes.
- **Market support.** ZOA facilitates the development of local markets, both input markets and output markets, horizontal and vertical market linkages, and the access of beneficiary groups to markets. ZOA supports local and national input providers to link up with beneficiary groups and to arrange for credit schemes which are favourable for all. ZOA organizes producer groups, including the poorest and most vulnerable people and households, in marketing associations and provides training and primary equipment for improving production, manufacturing or transformation methods and value chain development. ZOA facilitates contacts and arrangements between local and national traders and beneficiaries. Care is taken that various traders are engaged so that monopolies and unfair competition are avoided. If outside investors show interest in working with ZOA, ZOA carefully analyses their effects on local and national marketing mechanisms and only facilitates them if these effects are positive. In order to assist beneficiaries, especially primary production and value chain development, ZOA facilitates the access to market information, technical expertise, equipment and so on. The involvement of microfinance institutions is facilitated as well, for example by facilitating contacts between them and groups of beneficiaries and by providing temporary warranty funds.
- **Agricultural production.** ZOA supports both crop and animal production systems, in rural and semi-urban and urban areas. Crop production includes perennial food and non-food crops, seasonal crops and vegetables. Animal production includes all mammals, birds, fish, insects or other animals, managed for purposes of human consumption or income. ZOA realizes that in rural areas in fragile countries, the support to both crop and animal production has often not resulted in sustainable improvements of the access of households to food and income, and has not ensured sufficient robustness of the production systems in view of natural hazards. For this reason, ZOA puts a strong emphasis on analysing the underlying reasons why production systems perform poorly and why/how they are vulnerable to natural hazards. Subsequently, ZOA carefully analyses the best entry points for sustainable change and resilience of the agricultural systems to natural hazards, hence integrating the principles of Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Smart Agriculture.
- **Improved conditions for rural and urban development.** ZOA helps to improve the conditions for development by promoting the availability, accessibility and quality of basic services and relevant information, and by building the capacities of community based organizations dealing with key socio-economic and community governance issues, as well as relevant local government institutions.

3.2.2. Strategies

1. Income generation. ZOA's strategies are:
 - a. Making the right choices, based on: 1) a thorough analysis of the target groups, segregated by gender, vulnerability class and age: their current income generating activities and their strengths and weaknesses; their capacities and skills, their preferences, their norms and values, their access to resources, their participation in local organizations, their decision making methods, their status in the society; 2) a detailed assessment of the markets for skills, jobs, products; 3) detailed cost-benefit analyses of different IGA options, including economic, organizational, social and environmental cost-benefits and 3) the possibility of self-management, local integration and sustainability.
 - b. Providing the right expertise. Training and coaching associated to the IGAs will be done with experts who have sufficient experiences in the local setting and who can capitalize on existing strengths and opportunities. This applies to technical training as well as to training in administration, leadership, management, business development and marketing.
 - c. Ensuring that no-one is left behind, especially regarding the access to financial services. Existing and new financial services, including saving & loan schemes and business credits, will be supported so as to make them accessible to all. In order to avoid widening the gap between the poorest/most vulnerable and the better-off, ZOA provides extra support, for example: temporary cash instalments, free initial capital, free initial raw materials or warranty funds for microfinance institutions. When credit or saving & loan schemes are done in groups, ZOA will facilitate the inclusion of the poorest and most vulnerable in these groups, and avoid the creation of separate groups according to their financial capabilities or social position.
2. Market support. ZOA's strategies are:
 - a. Making the right choices, based on: 1) a detailed analysis of existing and future market potential and market development obstacles for envisioned products or services, 2) a good understanding of the players in this market, their linkages, their weaknesses and strengths, supporting systems, government and traditional rules and regulations, 3) a good understanding of relevant input markets, 4) existing skills, experiences and preferences of the targeted people, differentiated by gender, vulnerability class and age, 5) participatory analyses of different options for production, value chain development or development of services, group-based or individual.
 - b. Strengthening the access of targeted people, including the poorest and most vulnerable, to input markets, by: 1) improving linkages and contacts between input suppliers and targeted people, 2) assisting input suppliers in the procurement and delivery of good quality inputs, 3) promoting the availability of inputs by supporting microfinance institutions and their linkage to targeted people, provision of cash or vouchers, start-up packages.
 - c. Strengthening the access of targeted people, including the poorest and most vulnerable, to output markets, by: 1) facilitating the formation of new or strengthening existing associations of producers or service providers, with inclusion of the poorest and most vulnerable people, 2) facilitating contacts and agreements between targeted people/associations and traders, 3) addressing logistical constraints and 4) improving market information systems.
 - d. Using existing expertise and experiences related to the provision of capacity building services. Existing capacities and specialized national organizations will be mobilized for capacity building on topics related to 1) management and leadership of associations, 2) production and service development, and related quality standards, 3) numeracy, literacy and business development, 4) accessing and using market information, 5) negotiation, lobbying and advocacy.
3. Agricultural production. ZOA's strategies are:
 - a. Making the right choices. The choice of interventions is based on expert-led assessments of land & water issues and local agricultural production systems, segregated per vulnerability class, gender and ethnic (sub) group, including time allocation studies (see annex 1 for reference to guidelines), soil & water surveys, farm input and output markets, seed system analyses, analyses of water availability and use for crop and animal production, economic and environmental analyses, risk profiles related to crop and animal production, climate data and climate change projections and assessments of relevant crop production and animal husbandry organisations.
 - b. Improving systems. The primary accent is on improving and intensifying entire agricultural production systems, not on specific crops or animals. The entire systems are subject to improvements: higher production levels, sustainability and resilience to climate change and other hazards.

- c. Putting primary emphasis on the foundations of crop and animal production: sustained access to land and water for crop production and animal husbandry, sustained quality improvement of soils, effective prevention of erosion processes, sustained quality improvement of grazing areas and sustained improvement of water availability (including irrigation and flood recession farming) and water use efficiency.
 - d. Putting secondary emphasis on various building blocks of crop and animal production, including the strengthening of local seed selection and multiplication systems, improvements of post-harvest practices and storage, strengthening of local animal breeding methods, strengthening or developing crop and animal related value chains.
 - e. Using expert knowledge for the use of agrochemicals and veterinary products. ZOA recognises the necessity and potentialities – and also limitations - of using herbicides, pesticides, inorganic fertilizers and veterinary chemicals. High level expertise is made available for related technical and organisational training and capacity building, and the choice, application and handling of agrochemicals and veterinary products comply with international (WHO, EU, US-EPA) and national regulations (see annex 1).
 - f. Focussing on sustainable and climate smart agricultural production systems. For crop production systems, baseline data is established for the measurement and monitoring of key parameters for sustainability and climate robustness, including parameters for soil quality, water availability and water use efficiency, and for crop performance. For animal production, baseline data on parameters are established and monitored for fodder and water availability and quality, and animal production per household.
 - g. Applying community and household-owned strategies for innovation and dissemination. Innovations in agriculture are designed in collaboration with the targeted communities, and are tested, fine-tuned and adapted on plots or areas used by individual households (or – in case of innovations in animal grazing systems – by groups of households), segregated per vulnerability class, gender and ethnic (sub)group. These households, including men, women and children, will constitute centres of learning, dissemination and extension. Community members, especially women, with special skills in communication may be supported specifically, for instance by providing simple transport means, for dissemination and extension at wider scale, within and beyond their own communities. In principle, ZOA does not work through community demonstration plots, nor through demonstration or resource centres led by ZOA or other organisations.
4. Improved conditions for rural and urban development. ZOA's strategies are:
- a. Mapping. Interventions for improving the conditions are based on thorough analyses of all main stakeholders, relevant existing rules and regulations, relevant government and civil society organisations, cultural practices and traditions, and information systems, influencing positively or negatively the opportunities for rural and urban development.
 - b. Analysing effects. The choice of the interventions is based on thorough analyses of expected benefit/cost ratio's, do-no-harm considerations and perspectives of sustainability of results obtained, segregated per vulnerability class, gender and ethnic (sub)group.
 - c. Making use of, and building on, existing capacities and good practices. Existing expertise and experiences, within and outside the targeted communities, related to relevant skills for creating development opportunities, management & organisation, information exchange, training and capacity building, equipment and resources are mobilised, and capacity gaps identified, and addressed.
 - d. Building capacities in a participatory manner. Organisations and institutions identified as key for the creation of enabling conditions are strengthened so as to ensure that the responsibility of the capacity building trajectories, methodologies and tracking of results are assumed by the targeted organisations/institutions.
 - e. Engaging in participatory research and development. ZOA actively participates in applied research and development trajectories for supporting knowledge development relevant to creating conditions for development. ZOA collaborates with local and national government research institutions, and national and international research and knowledge centres. ZOA also participates in national and international knowledge development and exchange platforms.
 - f. Strengthening mechanisms for lobbying, advocacy, community – government dialogue and accountability. ZOA supports local civil society organizations, local government bodies and other local organisations to voice the development needs of local communities toward higher level government and private sector organisations, to engage in fruitful dialogue about plans, roles and responsibilities for developmental action and for government and private sector accountability and for transparency regarding the use of public resources.

3.2.3. Quality criteria

1. Income generating activities. ZOA's quality criteria are:
 - a. The support modality is in line with the needs, opportunities, existing skills and knowledge, norms and values; segregated by gender, vulnerability class and age.
 - b. The products made and skills acquired are congruent with the market demand.
 - c. The local management and organisation of the IGA are cost and time efficient.
 - d. The participants of IGAs have full freedom to use the benefits of them the way they wish. IGAs, including Village Saving and Loan schemes, are not supported with the pre-determined aim to finance other programme components.
 - e. The support to IGA activities are not resulting in distortions of the markets, for instance by creating unfair competition between producers or input suppliers.
 - f. High level of technical and capacity building expertise is available, relevant to the proposed IGAs.
 - g. Clear and realistic exit and sustainability indicators are formulated and monitored.
2. Market support. ZOA's quality criteria are:
 - a. The support modality is in line with the current and future potential of the particular market.
 - b. Support is given to strengthen not only the targeted core market for certain products, but also the supporting systems and the enabling environment.
 - c. The support to markets does not result in distortions of the markets, for instance by creating unfair competition between producers or input suppliers.
 - d. Support is given to improve the access to reliable information about markets and to enhance the market engagement practices of the targeted households and individuals, segregated by gender, vulnerability class and age.
3. Agricultural production. ZOA's quality criteria are:³
 - a. The support is geared to the needs and opportunities of large numbers of households, including the poorest and most vulnerable.
 - b. The support provided improves the productivity of labour investments of the targeted households.
 - c. The support provided significantly improves the access of the targeted households to food and income, on the short, medium and longer term.
 - d. Clear targets and indicators are set and monitored for the economic and environmental sustainability of the intervention results and for their resilience to natural hazards, including climate change.
 - e. High level of technical and capacity building expertise is used, relevant to the design, planning and implementation of the proposed interventions.
4. Improved conditions for rural and urban development. ZOA's quality criteria are:
 - a. The support tangibly results in the removal of obstacles and improved opportunities for all-inclusive rural and urban development.
 - b. The support tangibly results in improved access of the targeted households to relevant resources, including relevant information, input suppliers, training providers and knowledge sources.
 - c. Clear targets and indicators are set and monitored for the improvement of the development opportunities of women and marginalized groups.
 - d. Clear targets and indicators are set and monitored for the improvement of inter- and intra-community governance, stability, peace and cohesion.

³For details, guidance notes and indicators, see PMS: "Update Food Security and Livelihood Policies – Crop Production"

ANNEX I TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Access of households to food and income means the totality of food and income obtained by household members through all legal activities (including production activities, jobs, service provision, trading, collection of food from natural resources), gifts, loans and other transfers.

Applied research and development trajectories are activities in which ZOA engages in order to promote relevant knowledge development in close collaboration with the targeted groups or households, while accommodating updated academic knowledge and debates and applying scientific tools for experimental design, monitoring, data collection and analysis.

Agricultural production system is the totality of the ways in which households in prescribed geographical or agro-ecological boundaries use natural resources, labour and inputs with the aim to produce crops and animals.

Climate smart agriculture is crop and animal production done in a way which minimises the negative effects of current and projected climate trends, especially increased risks of dry spells, shifts and uncertainties regarding the start and ending of rainy and dry seasons, increased rainfall in short periods, increased risks of flooding and water logging, increased peak temperatures and increased risks of climate change related crop and animal diseases.

Do-no-harm considerations mean the analyses done and measures taken so as to ensure that programme activities do not result in increased tensions within and between individuals, groups and organizations, nor that they create new tensions.

A livelihood is a means of securing a living in a given context. When a person has access to less than 1.25 USD per day, the person is considered poor (UN criterion). When a person is at risk of losing his means of living because of changing circumstances, the person is considered vulnerable. ZOA's LH programmes contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goal 1: to end poverty in all its forms by 2030.

Food security is a situation that exists when a person has sustained access to and consumes sufficient, safe and nutritious food for an active and healthy life. ZOA's FS programmes contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

ANNEX II TOOLKITS

Food Consumption Score (FCS), see:

World Food Programme, Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Branch, 2008. Food consumption analysis -Calculation and use of the food consumption score in food security analysis, p. 8-15.

http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/manual_guide_proced/wfp197216.pdf?_ga=1.256080329.317763225.1465391197

Reduced Coping Strategy Index (r-CSI), see:

Maxwell, D. & R. Caldwell, 2008. The Coping Strategy Index. Field Methods Manual. Second edition, p17.

http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/manual_guide_proced/wfp211058.pdf

Regulations regarding the use of agrochemicals, see:

- The WHO Recommended Classification of Pesticides by Hazard and Guidelines to classification, 2009. <http://www.who.int/foodsafety/publications/classification-pesticides/en/>
- The EU Pesticide Database (regularly updated). <http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/pesticides/eu-pesticides-database/public/?event=activesubstance.selection&language=EN>
- US-Environmental Protection Agency (regularly updated): Registered products: <https://www.epa.gov/safepestcontrol/search-registered-pesticide-products>

Time allocation studies, see:

Gaasbeek, T. & R. van Til, 2014. Shedding Light on a Blind Spot. Incorporating labour constraints and labour productivity in the planning and evaluation of agricultural interventions. IS Academy – Human Security in Fragile States. WUR.

<https://www.wageningenur.nl/web/file?uuid=8f7f264c-374e-4943-98b8-e2e0903377ee&owner=6602f2b8-071e-47df-bc88-6b13909a61df>