

GAMBIA

RAPID ASSESSTMENT

Top-up to the Resilience of Organizations for Transformative Smallholder Agriculture (ROOTS) project



IFAD'S COVID-19 RESPONSE

RURAL POOR STIMULUS FACILITY (RPSF)

FACILITY'S PILLARS



RPSF project: Top-up to Resilience of Organizations for Transformative Smallholder Agriculture (ROOTS) project (Gambia)¹

Launched in April 2020, the Rural Poor Stimulus Facility (RPSF) is IFAD's multi-donor response to COVID-19. With the overall objective of providing agile support to poor rural producers affected by key immediate challenges posed due to COVID-19, it seeks to improve the resilience of rural livelihoods in the context of the crisis by ensuring timely access to inputs, information, markets and liquidity. The top-up to the Resilience of Organizations for Transformative Smallholder Agriculture (ROOTS) project in the Context of COVID-19 in Gambia is part of the 20% of the projects chosen to undergo a rapid assessment to report against Tier 1 'development result' indicators in the RPSF Results Measurement Framework.

Project activities

The project leveraged the existing Resilience of Organizations for Transformative Smallholder Agriculture (ROOTS) project, and it was implemented under the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture. With RPSF financing of US\$ 590,301, the objective of the RPSF funds in the Gambia was to minimize impacts of COVID-19 on livelihoods, resilience and food security.

The funds provided for the supply of inputs and basic assets for production of crops, and livestock. This included the purchase and distribution of 7.3 MT of climate resilient certified rice seed for producers, as well as supported rice seed produces in land preparation for 105 HA, as well as support to livestock owners with additional animals, additional birds, vaccinations and/or feed supplements women and youth small ruminant schemes and small poultry. The project also successfully delivered 1,205 Kg of climate resilient seed (Certified vegetable seed).

To assist with market access, the project provided cash support to more than 80 youth-led SMEs; and supported in logistics to ease transportation of agricultural produce to markets, in digital communication tools using social media platforms (Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Tik-Tok and Instagram). Also, the project successfully supported the provision of sanitizing materials, face masks for women/youth to enable market access whilst also increasing Covid-19 awareness (women groups empowerment, FO, Community radio outreach, Distribution of communication materials).

Through digital the project provided some extremely poor households with cash transfers of 60 to 80 USD and provided nearly 2,000 people with remote training in production practices/ technologies or in other income-generating activities.

The project supported more than 20,000 people, more than half of which were young and a large majority women, and reached 208,000 people.

¹ This note is prepared by Vibhuti Mendiratta, Gonzalo Nunez-Chaim and Piero Massotti from the Research and Impact Assessment (RIA) division of IFAD.

Rapid assessment methodology

Self-reported information on Tier I ‘development results’ indicators was collected from a representative sample of 500 beneficiary households supported by the initial grant, of which 17 percent are headed by women and 9 percent are headed by youth (aged less than 35 years). Details of each indicator were asked with the aim of capturing the potential contribution effect from i) COVID-19 and ii) the RPSF project. Interviews were conducted between the last week of February 2022 and the first week of March 2022 using primarily Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) survey for 94 percent of households, which was complemented with Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) survey for the remainder of interviews.

Key results ²

Contribution effect of COVID-19

- Most households experienced a sharp decline in production, market sales, income, assets owned and their resilience to other shocks due to COVID-19, prior to the start of project activities. However, households managed to sustain food security conditions and were less often affected on the number of meals consumed.
- Youth headed beneficiary households were more affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of sales and income, compared to households headed by adults. Contrary to this, women headed beneficiary households were less affected, compared to households headed by men, in terms of income and resilience.

Contribution effect of RPSF

- Around 7 out of 10 households were able to maintain or improve on most indicators of interest. The number of assets also showed improvements after the project was implemented, but fewer households reported improvements on this indicator.
- At the same time, a higher share of beneficiary households headed by women, compared to men, reported having maintained or improved the number of assets owned after the program was introduced. Moreover, a larger share of beneficiary households headed by youth, compared to adults, reported having maintained or improved sales, total income and number of meals consumed.

Lessons learned

- Future programs should explore improving resilience of youth headed households as they were more often affected by the pandemic. While asset accumulation takes more time, programs should consider how to support improvement in some of these longer-term outcomes.

² The rapid assessment does not consider a control group; thus, results are only indicative of potential contribution effects.

Figure 1: Percentage of households that experienced a loss in each Tier I indicator due to COVID

Figure 2: Percentage of households that were able to maintain or improve each Tier I indicator after RPSF

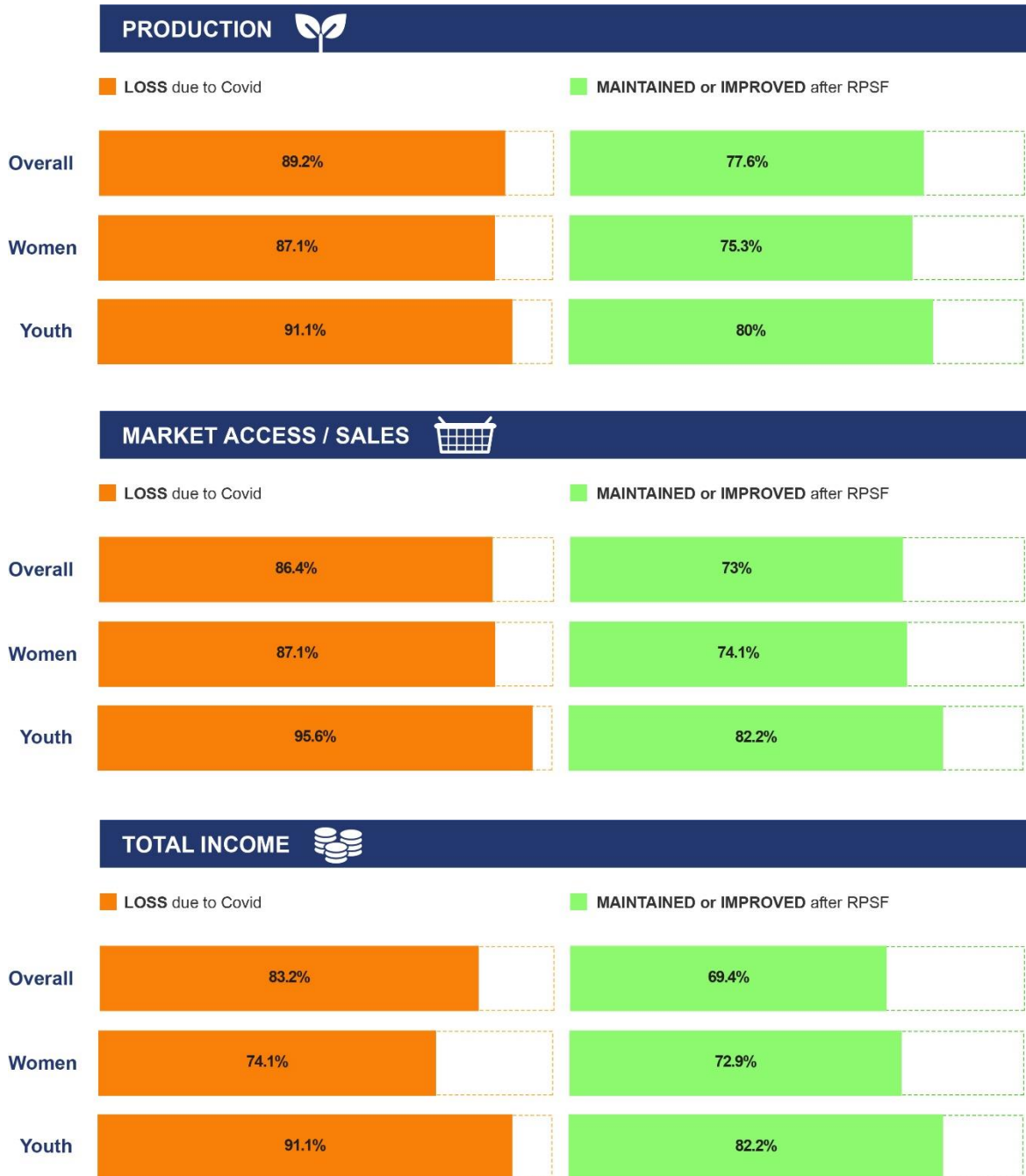


Figure 1: Percentage of households that experienced a loss in each Tier I indicator due to COVID

Figure 2: Percentage of households that were able to maintain or improve each Tier I indicator after RPSF



NOTE: RPSF activities were rolled out starting in June 2021.

Two separate questions were asked for each indicator. The first question asked what happened to each Tier 1 indicator between March 2020 – June 2021: i) a total loss; ii) reduced; iii) stayed the same; or iv) increased. The **orange bar** shows the percentage of households that responded i) or ii) to this question, that is, those which experienced a total loss or reduction in the indicator. The second question asked what happened to each Tier 1 indicator between June 2021 - January 2022: i) reduced further; ii) stayed the same; iii) returned to level before COVID-19; or iv) increased above the level before COVID-19. The **green bar** shows the percentage of households that responded ii), iii) or iv) to this question, that is, those which maintained or improved each indicator relative to pre-RPSF levels.

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