

Case study

Household Approach, Zambia

Gender, targeting and social inclusion



Case studies illustrate the kinds of interventions (from IFAD and other development agencies) that have used household methodologies effectively, highlighting the way each methodology has worked in a particular context.

The **case studies** are “living” documents and will be updated periodically based on new experiences and feedback. If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact the originators.

Originator

Clare Bishop-Sambrook

Lead Technical Specialist, Gender and Social Inclusion
Policy and Technical Advisory Division, IFAD
E-mail: gender@ifad.org

Prepared by

Michael Chishimba

Extension Specialist
Smallholder Productivity Promotion Programme, Zambia
Email: michaelchishimba@rocketmail.com

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Household Approach, Zambia

Section 1: Overview of the methodology

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| Name of the methodology | Household approach |
| Country/region of implementation | The household approach was implemented through the Agricultural Support Programme (ASP) that operated in four provinces (Central, Eastern, Northern and Southern) in Zambia, covered 22 out of 72 districts and operated in 242 agricultural extension camps. |
| Start/end date | 2003 - 2008 |
| Lead organization sponsoring the development and implementation of the methodology | ASP was a commercialization programme for small-scale farmers, funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and the Zambian Government. The programme was implemented through the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MACO). |
| Purpose of the methodology | The household approach was introduced as a gender mainstreaming tool to complement technical training and skills development in agricultural production and entrepreneurship. One-on-one household visits by the camp extension officer (CEO) assisted with translating the technical and entrepreneurial skills into individual household action plans and provided support and guidance during their implementation. |
| Contribution of the methodology to wider organizational/project goals | <p>The household approach contributed towards the ASP goal of poverty reduction by improving the livelihoods of small-scale farmer households through: improved food and nutrition security; and increased income deriving from the sale of mainly agricultural and agriculture-related products and services.</p> <p>All programme activities were delivered in the context of a gender mainstreaming environment, whereby the community, support entities, implementing partners and district facilitation teams were sensitized on gender issues. Specific initiatives encouraged women to participate in leadership positions, attend entrepreneurship training and be recruited as extension workers and ASP district coordinators.</p> |
| Target group | The ASP target group was 44,000 small-scale farming households. |

Section 2: Implementation arrangements

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| Implementing partners | <p>ASP operated on the basis of a tripartite partnership that linked households to public and private service providers for the services necessary to achieve household and programme objectives.</p> <p>MACO was the main partner for the household approach.</p> |
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| Selection of facilitators/mentors | <p>The main facilitators were the CEOs from MACO. In areas where the number of staff was insufficient, ASP also employed facilitators and occasionally hired private service providers. Ministry staff had the following characteristics: an interest in working with ASP, demonstrated facilitation skills, an ability to use the local language, commitment to ASP activities within the operational area and a willingness to learn new things and relinquish old habits.</p> <p>As a way of ensuring sustainability, ASP identified contact farmers and farmer leaders with the potential to learn and implement facilitation work within their communities and trained them in leadership, facilitation, good agricultural practices and business management.</p> |
| Training of facilitators/mentors | <p>Facilitators were trained in leadership, facilitation, good agricultural practices, business management and integrating cross-cutting topics, e.g. gender, HIV/AIDS and environment, into their work.</p> <p>Access to training motivated farmers to become service providers themselves, to support fellow farmers and ultimately to ensure the sustainability of their mentorship role.</p> |

Section 3: Household mentoring at the household level

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| Step 1: The facilitation cycle | <p>The ASP facilitation cycle had eight steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Selection of target areas 2. Awareness creation and initial community organization: farmers were encouraged to form interest groups with nearby farmers with the same business interests 3. Identification of opportunities for interest groups and individual farmers, including a diagnosis of farming systems and production opportunities 4. Identification of the training needs for women and men, and the provision of links to relevant technical, business and management training 5. Development of visions and action plans by selected households (see below) for each enterprise and consolidation of these into one comprehensive plan 6. Resource mobilization, including the introduction of new techniques and enterprises once households had reached their potential in their existing livelihoods system 7. Implementation of the action plan, including participatory monitoring 8. Evaluation. |
| Step 2: Household selection criteria | <p>Households were selected using the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Access to some resources (land, labour and start-up capital, where possible) ▪ Interested in ASP and participating in ASP activities (e.g. attending meetings) ▪ Willing to belong to an interest/farmers' group if not already a member ▪ Not too old to implement realistic business action plans. |

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| Step 3: Main elements of the household approach | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The CEO mentored individual households through regular, consistent and semi-intensive visits. ▪ All adult household members (husband, wife and older children) participated in setting the household vision and planning how to achieve it together. ▪ With the guidance of the CEO, the household prepared an individual household action plan. These plans were broken down into monthly action plans and followed up by an ASP facilitator at least once every six weeks with each household individually for three agriculture seasons. ▪ The household mobilized resources for implementing its plan. ▪ Progress with the plan was reviewed together by household members and ▪ The benefits (i.e. increased skills and knowledge, increased food security and increased incomes) were shared. |
| Step 4: Backstopping staff | <p>The implementation of the household approach was monitored through a transparent approach and with shared responsibility across all levels of programme staff. An important element was the critical lessons learned from the interactions of various levels of staff with rural communities and service providers through open and analytical discussions that welcomed constructive criticism and innovative ideas.</p> |
| Average length of the implementation cycle | <p>The average length of one implementation cycle depended on the enterprise the household engaged in. For sustainability purposes, CEOs generally worked with 100 farming households for at least three agriculture seasons and completed two cycles during ASP.</p> |

Section 4: Monitoring and indicators

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| Monitoring process | <p>ASP measured the progress of its targeted households on a five-graded scale in two development matrices: one measured performance as entrepreneurs and the other measured agricultural production skills.</p> <p>In both matrices, level one referred to a traditional household and represented a low level of development. Level two was the household that was aware of the need and opportunities to develop its livelihood but was not enterprising, while a level three household was one that was self-confident and had made clear progress in farming as a business but was not yet stable in entrepreneurial activities. Level four was an emerging household, making steady progress, and level five was a successful household that had made a very good business out of the opportunities on the farm.</p> |
| Indicators | <p>Indicators used to monitor the development of the household were linked to the two development matrices. There were no specific indicators for tracking changes in gender roles and relations at the household level.</p> <p>Entrepreneurship development matrix: investment in new businesses, improvement in the current business, an increase in business turnover, an increase in or enhancement of business linkages, increased savings and investment, the ability to access financial services and the ability to insure business.</p> <p>Agriculture (technical) development matrix: diversifying crop production, increasing livestock production, utilizing animal draught power, growing pasture, supplementary feeding of livestock, growing high-value crops, using improved seed, exploiting non-traditional farm enterprises, using sound land management practices, holding title or a written agreement for land-user rights, using labour-saving technologies and raising fruit trees and multi-purpose trees.</p> |

Section 5: Results

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| <p>Number of beneficiaries reached/ planned to be reached</p> | <p>ASP reached 44,000 households, of which 30 per cent of the individuals reached were female. This fulfilled ASP's target to achieve a minimum of 30 per cent of women's participation in all programme interventions.</p> |
| <p>Main changes that can be attributed to the methodology</p> | <p>Increased income: ASP households recorded significant increases in income and diversified income sources, which resulted in an increase in assets and the use of hired labour.</p> <p>Food security: There was a significant improvement among ASP households, comparing favourably with the control group and time-series data.</p> <p>Resilience: ASP households were more organized to respond to drought, illness in the family and other shocks and were able to easily find ways of coping with adverse conditions.</p> <p>Gender relations: Through the household approach, women's access to and control over resources and household incomes improved. Relationships between women and men were strengthened and their workloads were shared and made more equitable. Women's self-esteem and confidence was increased as they had become entrepreneurs and leaders in their home as well as the broader community.</p> <p>In ASP households, ownership of the individual plan, and responsibility for implementing it, was high. The approach empowered all household members in entrepreneurship and business management and in skills in land, crops and livestock management – and this was not perceived to be threatening by men. The openness reduced suspicion and generated more respect for one another's contributions to the household livelihood. Through the household approach, men found that it made sense to include their wives and older children in skills development and enterprise management. They no longer needed to be at home all the time but could tend to other duties such as marketing. Household activities continued in the absence of the male, including his death.</p> |
| <p>Key success factors and strengths of the methodology</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ASP thematic areas: addressing key issues of: food and income security; farming as a business focus/economic diversification; commercial perspective, including savings and credit systems; decentralization, good governance/democracy, local empowerment and participation; pluralistic extension services; strategies for gender, HIV/AIDS and environment; and walk-away and no-handout policies. ▪ Facilitation cycle: a process of systematically organizing activities in order to perform them in a participatory way. The cycle also strived to ensure that all activities were part of a process of dialogue and learning through a built-in system of reflection, action, reflection. ▪ Household approach: with the vision acting as a base and goal for household development and for promoting household socio-economic sustainability and strengthening gender participation. ▪ Targeting: 100 households in each agricultural extension camp (typically comprising 600 to 800 households) during each phase of ASP, following the selection criteria, to focus on farmers with the potential to do business. Resources and interventions were focused on driving change through regular, consistent and |

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| | <p>semi-intensive individual household follow-ups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The use of interest groups: which were commodity-specific to translate household needs into demand centres and to reach beyond the 100 households. ▪ The creation and strengthening of community organizations: (e.g. camp agriculture committees and cooperatives) as well as stakeholder coordination. ▪ The use of development matrices as tools for participatory monitoring and learning and for strategy development at the household level. |
| Challenges | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ASP was complex and implementation sometimes suffered from having to deal with too many diverse elements, which diluted management effort and resulted in an uneven allocation of time among different activities. ▪ The time required for the mindset change associated with the ASP extension approach, which was very different from MACO's approach, took considerably longer than expected. CEOs needed to be completely reoriented to be in line with the ASP participatory approaches, the facilitation cycle and the "farming as a business" concept. ▪ It was challenging to manage staff who were not fully committed to ASP. ▪ It took considerable time for communities to accept the no-handout approach, when many other agencies were providing handouts. |
| The way forward: potential improvements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Keep the programme design as simple as possible and only include components that directly complement each other, in order to create synergies and minimize management load. ▪ Allow enough time to adequately train a large pool of trainers and backstoppers, coupled with the early identification and development of other service providers. ▪ The household approach for addressing gender inclusion is essential for ensuring sustainable impact. |
| Sustainability | The contact farmers and farmer leaders trained in facilitation and other skills became service providers to other farmers and played the role of mentor. |

Section 6: Resources

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| Budget | ASP implementation budget during the first three years, between 2003 and 2005, was US\$18 million. |
| Resources | A handbook for facilitators entitled Facilitation in Action – A process for sustainable rural economic development (available only in hard copy). |



International Fund for Agricultural Development


Via Paolo di Dono, 44 - 00142 Rome, Italy


Tel: +39 06 54591 - Fax: +39 06 5043463

E-mail: ifad@ifad.org

www.ifad.org


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