Analysis of Indicators and Measurement Tools Used in Zambia to Assess Impact of Agricultural Extension Programs on Gender Equity and Nutrition Outcomes

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Introduction

- Investment in agricultural extension with a focus on gender equity and nutrition outcomes has increased in Zambia.
- With persistent high prevalence of malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies, it is either these initiatives have little impact on reducing malnutrition, they are not sufficient, the correct programs are not being implemented, and/or the methods used to measure the impact may be inappropriate.
- This study investigates whether the indicators and measurement tools applied in Zambia are capturing the right information to measure the impact of agricultural extension on gender equity and nutrition.

Objectives

Overall Objective: Contribute to a better understanding of how to measure the impacts of agricultural extension services on nutrition and gender outcomes within the Zambian context.

Specific Objectives

- Outline agricultural extension interventions that exist or have existed in Zambia in the last five years with a primary focus on gender equity and/or nutrition.
- Examine measurement tools and indicators used to assess impact of the interventions on gender equity and nutrition.
- Discusses the challenges experienced by organizations in Zambia in applying specific measurement tools.

Research Questions

- What type of agricultural interventions on gender equity and agricultural extension exist in Zambia?
- What do the tools used to collect intervention impact data measure?
- What are the main challenges faced by organizations in measuring the impact of their respective interventions?

Study Method

Step 1

Review of project documents including baseline surveys

Step 2

Interviews with project managers and/or monitoring and evaluation officers

Step 3

Validation workshop with stakeholder including the projects interviewed (26th June, 2016)

Figure 1: Frequency of Use of Nutrition and Food Security Measurement Tools by Projects

Figure 2: Frequency of Use of Gender Equity Impact Measurement Tools by Project

Results

Exemplary Dietary Diversity Indicators and Household Food Access Measurement Tools adopted by projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Project</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Household Dietary Diversity Score</td>
<td>Realigning Agriculture to Improve Nutrition Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Dietary Diversity Score</td>
<td>Harvest Plus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food Consumption Score</td>
<td>Integrated Poverty Reduction and Women Empowerment Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>Household Hunger Scale</td>
<td>Scaling Up Nutrition: First 1000 Most Critical Days Program</td>
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<td>Minimum Adequate Diet for Children</td>
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Challenges Faced by Projects in Data Collection for Impact Measurement

- Some measurement tools are costly
- Difficulties in obtaining adequate sample size for analysis
- Respondents providing inaccurate information
- Impact only measured at activity level, which does not reflect what the project ultimately wants to, or possibly did, achieve.
- Poor coordination between the evaluators and the staff.
- Underfunding to monitoring and evaluation components of the project making quality data collection very difficult. This can impact implementation.

Observations On measurement Tools in the Zambia

- General use of sub-sections of monitoring measurement tools as opposed to using all components.
- Narrow intervention agenda by projects therefore regarding the complete use of a tool as a waste of resources.
- General lack of local ownership and knowledge on impact measurement tools outside of the monitoring and evaluation team in the organizations.
- Non existence of a coordinating body on nutrition and gender interventions. Projects have many different approaches and apply some of the same and some different indicators to measure their impacts, but there is no means to evaluate them in the Zambian context or understand whether they are being applied consistently.

Conclusion and Recommendations

- Only a few projects are using measurement tools as they were designed to be used. Many projects are using only parts of measurement tools, even where the tool is supposed to be used in its entirety.
- Lack of knowledge of the various measurement tools and indicators means that data required to measure the impact of gender equity and nutrition outcomes could be of poor quality.
- Need to build capacity on nutrition and gender impact measurement tools to enable project staff to not only understand the tools, but to apply them appropriately.
- Need to develop a general monitoring and evaluation framework for Zambia to guide the use of some indicators specifically designed for measuring the impact of agricultural extension on gender and nutrition outcomes.
- Coordination of measuring of impact among different organizations with similar interventions should be encouraged.