



Learning Brief

CARE—FANRPAN POST PROJECT EVALUATION

OVERVIEW: CARE and FANRPAN share common approaches to sustainable economic and social development. We jointly recognize the challenges to inclusive agricultural development in Africa. We also recognize the importance of agriculture research, policy advocacy and capacity strengthening, all of which are needed to improve agricultural production and productivity. This study is an integral part of these shared objectives and is a collaborative effort of the CARE and FANRPAN teams in Mozambique.



Background

A common challenge faced in the implementation of the development initiatives is how to ensure long-term community adoption of new and different approaches. Often, techniques and practices that have been introduced by projects to improve the living conditions of the most vulnerable communities achieve substantive, visible results during the life of projects. They are then, however, often discontinued by households and communities after the involvement of implementing agencies ceases.

CARE and FANRPAN in Mozambique, carried out this Post Project Evaluation (PPE) to understand better the patterns of adoption of climate resilient agriculture practices. This is a first step and we would like to see PPE adopted as a standard approach. The aim of this study is to identify and understand how the practices and approaches introduced by projects have been permanently adopted by communities and which practices have been dropped.

Evaluation Approach and Projects Selected

This PPE draws information from qualitative sources and focusses on the attitudes and experiences of different stakeholders. We adopted this qualitative approach in order to maximize the learning from the community, also as this is a preliminary study we were more interested to identify broad themes and trends rather than presenting statistical data. The team interviewed key stakeholders

and informants involved in the implementation process of the projects. We organized Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) with participants of the projects and had in depth interviews with community leaders. The Two projects selected as the focus of this study were implemented by CARE in Mozambique.

Forestry and Agriculture Program in Mozambique

(FAPIM), was implemented in Meconta district, Nampula province for 3 years starting in April 2009. This project aimed to reduce the poverty and vulnerability of people living close to forests by increasing sustainable benefits from forest resources. This PPE focussed on activities aimed at promoting sustainable agriculture and post-harvest management methods and strategies.

Sustainable and Effective Economic Development (SEED)

project was a seven-year initiative that started in January, 2006, and ended in April, 2013. The project covered 4 districts in Inhambane Province with the overall aims of reducing poverty and stimulating economic recovery of vulnerable rural households. The project focussed on working with female headed households. The main program areas of this project included: agri-livestock; cashew production, and crafts. Cross-cutting issues included the promotion of financial inclusion through Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA), work to improve gender equality and combat the impacts of HIV.

Adoption and discontinuation are two sides of the same coin. We must identify and understand the determinants that affect small scale farmers' choices to adopt new practices and why they are dropped. We need to identify the issues that have particular relevance for rural women. By understanding the issues better we will be more effective and responsive to the needs and priorities of the communities we are working with.

Main Findings:

Innovations Adopted by the Communities

The Post Project Evaluation concluded that:

Adoption of innovations is most likely to happen when farmers are confident that the new practice will not only help to improve production and productivity, but will also directly increase income. New technologies or practices are more likely to be adopted if they show an obvious financial advantage when compared to traditional practices.

FAPIM project promoted a range of Conservation Agriculture (CA) practices including; protection of natural resources; sustainable exploration and restoration of forests through new plantations, and post-harvest management systems. Of these activities, the **peanut dryer** is the main technique that participants have adopted and widely accepted by other producers who were not beneficiaries of the project.

The peanut dryer helps farmers to improve quality of the product and reduces post-harvest losses. The crop produced has improved quality for marketing and consumption, and ensures better seed quality for planting. Given the advantages of this technique, several communities have adopted it as a common practice.

This post-harvest management technique, was introduced by the project and initially only the beneficiaries of the project knew the technique. However, spontaneous adoption of dryers has occurred among other farmers outside the former project areas. The success of the peanut dryer rests on its ability to improve the commercial viability of production.

In addition to the adoption of the peanut dryer **soil management practices** and **crop production** such as: crop rotation; permanent soil cover; aligned planting; non-use of fires to open new farming fields, have also become common practices at the community level as a result of project implementation.

VSLA—Investments and opportunities for youths

Most savings groups created by SEED project continue to operate, and the number of Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) has increased. This increase in the number of groups indicates the adoption of this practice by households that were not included in the project.

Group members continue to generate additional income through small business investments, which were made possible by savings and access to credit. Through savings and loans, women, in particular, continue to reduce their vulnerability to the threat of exploitation.

Some of the groups have integrated youth and girls in their savings and loans activities, which has helped them to continue their education. The integration of youth into savings and loans groups was not given due attention during the project implementation phase. This has been a spontaneous development building on what was established by the project.

Livestock Management

The livestock value chain development is another sustainable activity, and again this is directly linked to financial benefit. Almost all promoters trained during the project to provide technical assistance to cattle keepers continue to function this role in the communities after the project ceased. Most of the associations created during the project to ensure organized marketing of cattle continue to function, at least partly because of continued government involvement.

Breeders continue to look at cattle as a source of income after understanding that cattle, in addition to being useful for consumption, are a source of income to ensure the well-being of their family.



Peanut Dryer—in Meconta District

Project participants use individual rationality and a logic of collective action to make decisions about what strategies they will permanently adopt from development projects. Communities often make a cost-benefit calculation before adopting a particular practice and will only do so if the benefits are clear.

Discontinuity

What Stopped Working

One of the techniques promoted by FAPIM was *mulching*. This practice was accepted during the project's life cycle but was only ever used in demonstration plots and was never adopted by the communities. This was because mulching increases the workload of producers.

Communities did not see mulching as necessary for crops such as peanuts and sesame (major crops in the Meconta district) and the exercise of having to gather and move the grass from one place to another (from personal farming fields) was exhausting and time consuming.

Another challenge presented by communities is the unavailability of inputs, such as seeds. FAPIM distributed seeds and other agricultural inputs, but with the end of the project the necessary continuity of supply was not ensured. Producers thus continue to face the challenge of lack of seeds and tools.

The Market System Dilemma

The lack of markets and access routes that facilitate the flow of production leads many local producers to invest little in production. Farmers will not increase production unless there is an obvious market, otherwise they are just producing crops that will be wasted.

The lack of markets is also cited as the main factor that dictated the discontinuation of the Farmer Field School (FFS). The aim of the FFS under the project was to produce an association that would facilitate increased commercialization. However, the project was not able to establish links with the markets/buyers during implementation, and products were sold at prices that farmers considered too low to be commercially viable.

Cattle Value-chain: The Marketing Regression

Cattle trade fairs no longer function as they were intended to. During the project, these fairs were the meeting point between breeders and buyers of cattle where, in the

presence of the District Economic Services, cattle prices were negotiated fairly.

At the moment the fairs only work for the registration of buying and selling of the cattle. Price negotiations are carried out outside the fairs and continue to be arbitrary and unregulated leaving farmers open to exploitation and unfair terms of trade when they sell their stock.

The scales that were used in the fairs to weigh and set the price of the cattle are no longer used. This resulted from lack of maintenance and also lack of interest and commitment of farmers and buyers. Consequently, the price of cattle is arbitrarily defined, usually damaging the breeders' interest, since the buyer dictates the price.

Collective corrals that were introduced during the project and used by breeders to wash and medically treat their cattle no longer function. These corrals usually worked in ponds, but due to frequent droughts very few breeders continue to use them.

***“Why should I increase production if I have
nowhere to sell my produce? “
Do these practices show advantage com-
pared to traditional ways?
Produce and then lose everything?”***

Local Government Roles

Some activities promoted by projects depend entirely on the interest and ownership of local governments to ensure their continuation and sustainability. The FAPIM team started with the inspection of forest resources. However, the inspectors selected and trained by FAPIM are no longer carrying out their activities due to lack of monitoring and support from local government. As a result, communities report that the forest resources are being exploited illegally and without any respect for the good practices that had been promoted by projects.

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