# **CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES**

# Introduction to SMART Skills for Rural Development

**A SMART Skills Manual** 

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### **SMART Skills manuals:**

- Introduction to SMART skills for rural development
- Organizing and managing farmer groups
- Understanding natural resources
- Managing natural resources
- Marketing basics
- Seven steps of marketing
- Promoting innovation



# **Purpose of the SMART skills series**

To introduce you to the following five skill areas:

- Group management/organization
- Natural resources management
- Finance
- Marketing
- Innovation







## **Manual content**

### Six lessons:

- Using a skills-based approach
- A closer look at the skills
- Organizing the team
- Working with the community
- Ensuring sustainability
- Building a training plan







# Lesson 1: Using a skills-based approach





## **Outcomes**

### After this lesson, you will be able to:

- List the main skills that groups of male and female farmers need to improve their livelihoods.
- Explain why farmers need a combination of skills.
- Outline the model of change used in this and related courses.





# **Overview**

### Lesson 1 covers the following content:

- Five types of skills
- The need for multiple skills
- Benefits of multiple skills for farmers and for project management
- SMART skills in development projects
- Six aspects of development projects





# **Types of skills**

Farmers need the following, mutually supporting skills:

- Group organization
- Managing natural resources
- Managing finances
- Marketing
- Innovation







# **Benefits of multiple skills for farmers/rural clients**

### • Food security:

Growing, accessing and using more food

### Income:

Selling high quality products at higher prices in lucrative markets

## Organization:

Working with neighbors to solve problems together

## Sustainability:

Building on improvements

## • Scaling up:

Helping farmers to sell more products in larger markets



# **Benefits of multiple skills for projects**

- Knowledge, skills and attitudes
- Training tools
- Open education and certification and easy-to-use training material
- Better information
- Measuring (monitoring and evaluating) outcomes
- Improve sustainability





# **SMART skills in development projects**

# SMART skills promote by helping or teaching rural farmers to:

- Manage their finances, natural resources, technologies and market linkages effectively
- Manage money, save and invest money wisely
- Improve their productivity in a sustainable way and build longterm and profitable market linkages





## Six aspects of development projects







## **Drivers of change**

- Demographics
- National and local patterns of economic growth
- Infrastructure
- Markets
- Government policy
- Stability
- Large-scale investments
- Climatic conditions





## **Project context**

#### **Initial status:**

- Emergency, e.g. a flood
- Long-term problems, e.g. poverty and political instability
- Building up farmers' assets from scratch
- Aiming for growth and increasing assets



## **Client types**

- Male and female clients
- Single and married, old and young clients
- Very poor clients: landless people, clients with no assets, widows and orphans
- Clients with assets and savings
- People in remote areas
- People from different ages, ethnic groups and educational levels





# **Types of intervention**

#### Asset transfer:

Technologies, food and money

• Skills training:

Groups, savings and loans, marketing, production and innovation

Service linkage:

Inputs, finance, extension, output markets

• Public works:

Roads, water and communications



# **Transfer agents**

- Government extension advisors and services
- NGO field agents
- Civil society services
- Community volunteers
- Private extension services







# **Behavior change**

- Client's ability to integrate skills
- Use of new technology and best practices
- Development of relationships with markets and service providers
- Effects of investments in different community segments





# **Desired outcomes**

- Productivity
- Income
- Sustainability
- Resilience
- Diets
- Hygiene
- Food prices
- Growth





# Lesson 2: A closer look at the SMART skills





### After this lesson, you will be able to:

- Name three detailed aspects of each of the SMART skills.
- Describe how individual skills reinforce each other.
- Name the three central skills.
- List additional skills that farmers may need.





## **Overview**

Lesson 2 takes a closer look at the five SMART skills:

- Group organization/management
- Managing natural resources
- Managing finances
- Marketing
- Innovation





# **SMART Skill 1: Group organization**

In order to work together, a group has to:

- Work together in the long-term.
- Trust one another.
- Learn to plan ideas together.
- Make important decisions on:
  Who is in the group?
  - o What are the rules?
  - o What will the group invest in?
  - How will the group resolve disagreements?





# **Basics of group management**

- Selecting members
- Defining the group's purpose
- Setting goals
- Holding meetings and writing a constitution
- Electing management positions
- Planning and implementing activities



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# **Basics of group management (Continued)**

- Opening a bank account and managing finances
- Registering with local authorities and opening a bank account
- Having learning processes
- Having feedback mechanisms to assess group performance and progress





## **SMART Skill 2: Natural resource management**

- Consequences of overexploitation of natural resources:
- Soil erosion
- Deforestation
- Low groundwater levels





## Natural resource management

## **Individual farmers:**

- Improve water use by harvesting rainwater and using irrigation
- Grow more suitable crops, rotating crops and using improved varieties





# **Natural resource management (Continued)**

### **Individual farmers:**

- Manage soil better by using methods such as zero tillage
- Use compost and appropriate amounts of artificial fertilizer
- Reduce the use of agrochemicals





# Natural resource management (Continued)

# Groups of farmers and communities:

- Control erosion by building bunds and check dams
- Replant vegetation and restrict the cutting of wood
- Protect springs
- Build irrigation systems
- Restrict grazing in degraded areas





# **SMART Skill 3: Managing finances**

# Financial skills of farmers and farmer groups:

- Calculating costs
- Understanding cash flow
- Predicting income
- Planning budgets
- Saving money
- Managing bank accounts
- Understanding the cost of borrowing money and using loans





# **Managing finances**

## Financial skills of savingsand-loan groups:

- Managing personal and business budgets
- Establishing groups and rules of operation
- Keeping financial records
- Agreeing on the amounts and regularity of saving and pay-out time
- Managing loan applications and loan repayment





# **Managing finances (Continued)**

## Financial skills of savingsand-loan groups:

- Managing capital over the long-term
- Managing investments
- Registering the group with authorities
- Reaching agreements of penalties if members do not conform to group rules





# **SMART Skill 4: Marketing**

# Smallholder farmers can earn more by:

- Organizing as a group and learning together
- Gaining from lower input prices, buying in bulk and pooling their produce
- Gaining better produce prizes by aggregating their goods and selling larger amounts





# **SMART Skill 4: Marketing (Continued)**

# Smallholder farmers can earn more by:

- Identifying buyers who pay higher prices for bulked goods
- Improving product quality
- Switching to more profitable products and more lucrative markets





# **Marketing skills**

### Farmers need skills in:

- Organizing groups
- Selecting products and analyzing markets
- Calculating costs, incomes and profits for new a new agroenterprise
- Working with business development services





# Marketing skills (Continued)

## Farmers need skills in:

- Building business plans
- Collective marketing
- Reviewing actual costs, income and profits at the end of a season
- Planning for next season and scaling up




#### **SMART Skill 5: Innovation**

# Key innovation skills include:

- Identifying and defining problems
- Exploring possible solutions and finding sources of information
- Designing a practical way to do research





#### Smart Skill 5: Innovation (Continued)

# Key innovation skills include:

- Collecting and recording observations
- Analyzing and evaluating the results
- Applying the findings and sharing knowledge





# Three central skills: Finance, natural resource management and marketing



## Adding skills: Developing particular types of groups

• Savings and loan group: Focuses on finance

- Innovation group:
  - Focuses on natural resource management

Marketing group:

Focuses on agro-enterprises







# Single-skill group focuses on one skill, such as:

- Savings
- Production
- Managing natural resources
- Innovation

Multi-skill group combines two or more skills, such as:

- Savings
- Marketing

#### **Example:**

A savings group that also markets its member's produce



## Other skills that rural people need

- Literacy and numeracy
- Leadership
- Production methods
- Agricultural processing
- Nutrition
- Health and hygiene



- Non-farm income-earning skills
- Gender issues
- Conflict management
- Communication and lobbying



### From single-skill to multi-skill approach

To change from a single-skill to a multi-skill team approach, you have to:

- Ensure that all team members understand the SMART skills approach
- Determine the skills needs in the communities
- Train team members in additional skills



Introduction to SMART Skills for rural development

A SMART SKILLS MANUAL

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To change a from singleskill to a multi-skill team approach, you have to:

- Design training programmes for clients to learn multiple skills
- Design interventions that enable clients to use their skills



Organizing and managing farmers' groups

A SMART SKILLS MANUAL

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#### Single skill versus multiple skills







## Lesson 3: Organizing the team





#### After this lesson, you will be able to:

- Describe how a typical development project team is organized.
- Assess the skills of team members.
- List participatory training methods.
- Describe the advantages of participatory training compared to traditional training methods.
- Describe how to adapt training for illiterate people.
- List the major types of training materials and equipment you will need

#### **Overview**

## Lesson 3 covers the following content:

- Organizing the project team
- Evaluating the skills of team members and partner organizations



• The types of training materials and equipment you will need





Project leader:	Coordinates the project direction, investment and progress.
Theme leaders:	Coordinate the activities and provide training for specific objectives, such as production, marketing or finance.
Field staff:	Coordinate staff of local partner organizations, after they have been trained by the theme leaders.
Field agents:	Agents from local organizations who work directly with groups of farmers.



### First meeting of the project team

#### **Before the first meeting:**

- Make sure that the team has a clear understanding about the project.
- Provide sufficient time for the community to be prepared.
- Prepare a clear agenda.
- Discuss the background information regarding the local culture, recent history and local achievements.





### Tasks for the first project team meeting

- Hold sessions and workshops to reinforce key goals and objectives.
- Make sure that the community and partners know the approach and steps to follow.
- Determine how the project team and the community will work together.





## Tasks for the first project team meeting (Continued)

- Draw up an organogram.
- Prepare clear scopes
   of work for each
   team member.
- Discuss training plans based on the needs of the local people.







### **Evaluating project team experience and skills**

# What experience does each person have in:

- Group management
- Finance, saving and loans
- Natural resource management and sustainable production
- Marketing and agro-enterprise
- Innovation



What **additional skills** do team members need and how can they get these?



## Working with partner organizations

# Partner organizations may include:

- Local NGOs
- Church organisations
- Government agencies
- Research institutions
- Financial institutions
- Private companies





### **Discussion points with partners**

Skills	<ul> <li>What can the partner offer the project group?</li> <li>Does the partner have the skills needed?</li> </ul>
Commitment	<ul> <li>How will they contribute and support the project?</li> <li>Is the partner interested in a multi-skills approach?</li> </ul>
Specialization	Is the partner able to support only one of the skills and is this acceptable?
Location	Does the partner work in the same geographic area?
Resources	Does the partner have the resources to engage in the project?
Reporting	Does the partner agree to link field data and financial reporting into a single routine reporting process?



### Reporting

- Financial accountability and technical reporting are required to maintain payments.
- Technical reporting should be done according to agreed formats and timetables.
- Project payments should be based on an agreement of no data – no payment.





#### Field agents should:

- Be dynamic and interested in their new role
- Have strong participatory skills
- Reflect the gender and ethnic composition of the clients
- Have some background in the core skill areas (if possible)





## **Training project and partner staff**

#### A training programme may include:

- Giving the staff SMART skills training materials
- Arranging for staff to take online training courses
- Enabling staff to learn on the job
- Hiring new staff with the missing skills
- Asking partners with specialized skills for training support



**Marketing basics** 

A SMART SKILLS MANUAL



#### **Traditional (lecture-based) teaching**

- The teacher tells the learners what they need to know.
- The teacher is more knowledgeable and experienced than the learners.
- The teacher shares his/her knowledge by lecturing.
- The learners are passive: listening and taking notes.
- The learners learn from the correct answer that the teacher gives.



Traditional, one-way teaching is not a good way to teach SMART skills, because:

 Learners of SMART skills are adults with their own experiences.



- Adults learn best by doing things

   not by listening and/or seeing.
- For many problems, there are **several possible solutions** that may be discovered.





## **Participatory training**

- The trainer asks questions and facilitates discussions.
- Both the trainer and the trainees are knowledgeable and experienced.
- Everyone reflects on their own and then shares their ideas, experiences and expertise.
- Trainees are active and analytical, asking questions and exploring alternatives.
- Trainees develop their own answers and there may be many different answers/solutions.



Participatory training is the better approach for the skills set method, because it encourages learners to:

- Share their experiences
- Suggest ideas
- Debate solutions
- Try things out in a practical way – through exercise and experiments





The project team has to decide if:

- All training will be feebased
- Some skills training will be offered as a free service and others as a fee-based service





#### Free and fee-based training: Considerations

The project team should consider that:

- Free training services are limited to the duration of a project
- Fee-based training services can be:

Marketed as a business

 $_{\odot}$  Continue when the project ends



**People in rural areas:** 

- Have had little or no formal education
- May find it hard to read and write, do arithmetic, understand symbols, diagrams and maps
- May have poor eyesight and/or may be color-blind
- May need more time to think logically and understand abstract ideas





## Tips for working with people with little education

- Say things clearly and repeat if necessary.
- Do not use technical jargon.
- Use objects, lines and dots rather than numbers.
- Simplify numbers and tables and use round numbers.
- Use leaves and seeds to represent crops and trees.
- Use pictures as well as words.





# Tips for working with people with little education (Continued)

- Make sure someone in each group can read and write.
- Make exercises practical and real.
- Get learners to repeat key ideas back to you.
- Do not talk down to people.





#### A good facilitator

- Guides trainees to critical thinking and making decisions.
- Is sensitive to the feelings, attitudes, culture and interests that may be present in the group.





## A good facilitator (Continued)

- Structures training sessions and guides learning activities
- Presents information in an interesting way
- Asks questions and gets trainees to participate and share their ideas





#### **Participatory training methods**

- Presentations
- Plenary discussions
- Group discussions and exercises
- Focus groups
- Maps and diagrams
- Games and role plays
- Individual or pair work
- Practical assignments
- Coaching
- Field visits and cross visits
- Field days, fairs, posts, theatre, exhibits



#### **Presentations**

- Presentations are useful to introduce a topic and to present information or give assignments.
- Keep the presentation short and make it interesting.
- Presentations may be given by the facilitator, a guest speaker, or by one of the participants.





## **Plenary discussions**

# Plenary discussions are useful to:

- Ensure that participants have understood the presentation
- Enable general questions






#### **Group discussions and exercises**

- Group discussions are best for detailed analysis of a topic.
- Divide the participants into groups and give them a topic to discuss, a task to perform or a problem to solve.
- Go around the groups to make sure they have understood the assignment and to help them if necessary.
- When they have finished, bring the groups back together to present and discuss their findings.



#### **Focus groups**

Focus groups are a kind of open-ended group interviews. They are a good way to:

- Collect information about a particular subject
- Identify challenges and opportunities
- Explore interest in possible solutions





### **Maps and diagrams**

# Maps and diagrams are a good way to:

- Gather information
- Get participants to identify and analyze problems
- Present information to others
  They can be drawn with:
- A stick on a piece of sandy ground (use leaves, stones or seeds as markers)
- Colored chalk on a concrete floor
- Marker pens a large piece of paper





Games and role plays are a fun way to start people thinking about complicated issues, such as:

- Money
- Sustainability
- Marketing
- Business.





#### Games and role plays (Continued)



Games and role plays also get people to **think about their own skills**, such as **entrepreneurship** and **marketing**.





### Individual or pair work

- Give individual participants (or pairs of participants) an assignment – such as filling in a form or drawing a map of their farm.
- Go around to make sure that they understand what to do.
- At the end of the assignment, ask one or two to present their results to the whole group.





### **Practical assignments**

# Examples of practical assignments include:

- Organizing market research
- Participatory appraisal exercises, such as transect walks and seasonal calendars
- Registering a savings group with the authorities.
   Make sure that the participants make the decisions and do as much of the work as possible.





### Coaching

Some activities are complex and they require **intensive or repeated guidance**, such as **coaching**.

**Example:** Visit a new group to advise members how to get organized and draw up a constitution.





### Field visit and cross visits

You can **organize visits** to other villages, research organizations, or markets.

Participants can study particular aspects of a topic and learn how others solve a problem.







#### **Demonstrations and experiments**

These are **often done in the field** rather than the classroom.

A demonstration or experiment may be **quick and simple** (e.g. digging a hole to look at the soil profile), or **take a whole season** (e.g. an experiment to compare the yields of several varieties of crop).







## Field days, fairs, posters, theatre and exhibits

Field days, fairs, posters, theatre and exhibits are good ways for the group to share their findings with other local people and outsiders.







## **Training venue**

Hold sessions with farmers in the field rather than in a formal classroom.

Have people sit in a circle rather than in rows facing the trainer. That makes it easier for participants to have discussions among themselves.

For **group activities**, arrange participants in groups of four to six people.





Make sure women can participate by:

- Encouraging women to join groups and attend the training
- Holding training sessions at times that women will be free from their household duties
- Holding separate training sessions for women
- Inviting women to speak up and contribute their ideas
- Supporting women's involvement and allowing their children to attend the training
- Not allowing men to dominate



## **Identifying the trainer**

- Assess the training needs of each staff member.
- Arrange courses for learning additional skills.
- Train staff in participatory training methods.



- Assign skilled trainers as mentors for less-experienced staff.
- Arrange for less-experienced staff to attend training courses with local people.



The following training materials are available for the SMART skills:

- Printed training guides and online books
- Distance learning courses
- Software applications
- Exercises that are used in the field

Face-to-face courses, which can be complemented with:

- Additional printed manuals that staff study on their own
- Enabling staff to study online

#### Forms

## Some modules use forms that participants can use to:

- Help them learn
- Record and report on observations
- Make calculations
- Analyze information





## **Types of forms**

- Paper forms
- Online forms
- Offline forms

PRODUCTION COSTS	UNIT	NO. OF UNITS	PRICE PER UNIT (\$)	COST (\$
MATERIALS				
Seed	5-kg bags			
Fertilizer	50-kg bags			
Sacks	Bags			
Air time for a mobile phone	Minutes			
Transport to market	Bags			
Market fee	Per bag			
A: Total cost of materials				
HIRED LABOR				
Land preparation	Person-days			
Harvesting	Person-days			
B: Total hired labor costs				
C: Total costs (excluding family i	C: Total costs (excluding family labor): A + B			
FAMILY LABOR				
Planting	Person-days			
Fertilizer application	Person-days			
1st weeding	Person-days			
2nd weeding	Person-days			
Drying	Person-days			
Dehusking, sorting, cleaning	Person-days			
D: Total family labor costs				
E: Total costs (including family i	abor): A + B + D			
INCOME	Unit	No. of units	Price per unit (\$)	Income
Sale of maize	50-kg bag			
Sale of maize	50-kg bag			
Sale of maize	50-kg bag			
P: Total Income				
PROFIT (excluding family labor)	F-C			
PROFIT (including family labor): F- E				

PRODUCTION COSTS	UNIT	NO. OF UNITS	PRICE PER UNIT (\$)	COST (\$	
MATERIALS					
Seed	5-kg bags	5	1.50	7.5	
Fertilizer	50-kg bags	1	\$0.00	SO.0	
Sacks	Bags	50	0.25	12.5	
Air time for a mobile phone	Hinutes	10	0.15	1.5	
Transport to market	Bags	50	0.65	32.5	
Market fee	Perbag	50	0.05	2.5	
A: Total cost of materials				106.5	
HIRED LABOR	HIRED LABOR				
Land preparation	Person-days	2	10.00	20.0	
Harvesting	Person-days	8	7.50	60.0	
B: Total hired labor costs				80.0	
C: Total costs (excluding family	labor): A + B			186.5	
FAMILY LABOR					
Planting	Person-days	2	8.00	16.0	
Fertilizer application	Person-days	1	8.00	8.0	
1st weading	Person-days	3	8.00	24.0	
2nd weeding	Person-days	2	8.00	16.0	
Drying	Person-days	4	8.00	32.0	
Dehusking, sorting, cleaning	Person-days	9	8.00	72.0	
D: Total family labor costs				168.0	
E Total costs (including family	labor): A + B + D			354.5	
INCOME	Unit	No. of units	Price per unit (\$)	Income	
Sale of maize	SO-kg bag	20	6.50	130.0	
Sale of maize	50-kg bag	20	8.00	160.0	
Sale of maize	50-kg bag	10	8.50	85.0	
F: Total Income				375.0	
PROFIT (excluding family labor): F- C				188.5	
PROFIT (including family labor): F - E				20.5	

6



### **Equipment used to teach SMART skills**

- Large sheets of paper, marker pens and cards
- Hoes, spaces, other farm equipment and seeds
- Transport
- Computer





## Lesson 4: Working with the community





#### Outcomes

#### After this lesson, you will be able to:

- List the things you need to explain to local people when you start a project in a new village.
- List the types of information you need to collect in the village.
- Describe four categories of people your project may target.
- Describe how to sort people into these categories.



#### **Overview**

## Lesson 4 covers the following content:

- The initial meeting and start-up meetings
- Collecting information on the target area



- Entry points for starting a project
- Identifying and serving specific groups in the community





### **Initial set-up meetings: Purpose**

- Learn about the communities' resources, assets, skills and ambitions
- Organize the project team to plan the most appropriate interventions
- Explain the multi-skilled approach to community members
- Collect information on the community





#### Multi-skilled approach: skills vs assets

# Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a main to fish and feed him for a lifetime.







#### **Collecting information on the target area**

- Geographic context: Topography, climate, roads, etc.
- Social context: Demographics, farmer types
- Natural resources: Soils, water, food, cash crops
- Local production resources: Farm sizes, equipment
- Financial services: Savings groups, money lenders
- Business and market organization: Main market options, types of marketing systems, major products and services





### **Baseline study**

A formal, gender-disaggregated baseline study gives information on key indicators of wellbeing, such as:

- Demographics
- Assets
- Food security
- Access to services
- Health status of family members
- Average income
- Group memberships





## Participatory appraisal (Rapid market appraisal)

A participatory appraisal provides the project team with community information on, for example, markets and natural resources.









#### **Understanding social structure**







#### Who to work with: Population levels



## **Client profile of highly vulnerable people**

	Land: Very small plots or landless
	<b>Production:</b> No surplus staple food for sale
	Food security: Food insecure
Sec. S	Income and assets: Less than \$0.50/day
	Education: Little education
<i>i the second se</i>	Markets: Not engaged





### **Development strategy for highly vulnerable clients**

**Recover assets and stabilize income** 

- Finance: Financial education, savings groups, small loans and vouchers
- Production and natural resources: Input subsidies, training to boost staple food productivity, income diversification, intensive backyard production and clean water
- Group organization: Production groups and savings groups





## Client profile of highly vulnerable but viable people

	Land: Small plots
	Production: Occasional surplus
	<b>Food security:</b> Food insecure for less than 1–2 months
	Income and assets: \$0.5–2/day
	Education: Some education
<b>*</b>	Markets: Limited markets

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# **Development strategy for vulnerable but viable clients**

Build: Protect assets, build resilience, skills and market linkages

- Markets: Awareness raising, market visits and link to service providers
- Finance: Savings groups and small loans
- Production and natural resources: Enhance productivity and diversity to raise income, improve natural resources management
- Group organization: Savings, innovation groups and cooperatives
- Innovation: Test new ideas in innovation groups



## **Client profile of market-ready smallholders**

	Land: Access to large plots, labor
	Production: Use of fertilizer
	Food security: Usually food secure
Ser and a series of the series	Income and assets: \$3+/day; savings
	Education: Good education
<i>i the second se</i>	Markets: Sell surplus
	Innovation: Seeking new technologies
1:1	

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**Development strategy for market-ready smallholders** 

#### **Grow: Market-oriented production**

- Markets: Train in the use of market information
- Finance: Access to financial services
- **Production and natural resources:** Specialization to improve water use efficiency; watershed management
- Group organization: Associations of cooperatives
- Innovation: Innovation groups



#### **Commercial smallholder farmers**



Lead farmers, who are not targets of development projects. As lead farmers, they are often included in:

- Project planning and guidance
- Testing and demonstrating technologies
- Supporting market linkage opportunities



### **Targeting groups: The entire community**

#### The entire community and everyone who is interested






## **Targeting groups: Specific categories**

# Specific categories of target groups, for example:

- Highly vulnerable women
- Young people
- Those who farm one hectare or less







### **Targeting groups: Groups other than the poor**

Groups other than the poorest people, for example market-ready farmers who lack the organization and trading relationships to sell their produce at a profit







## Methods for identifying categories of clients

- Ask the authorities: local governments and village leaders
- Wealth ranking
- Self-selected groups
- Card sorting







### **Questions to help with wealth ranking**

- How much land do you cultivate?
- Is your land irrigated?
- How many cows do you own?
- How many rooms are there in your house?
- How many months a year do you have enough food to feed your family?
- Do you earn most of your money working outside the village?





## **Specific groups in the community**

- Women: Widows and households headed by women
- Young people: Majority in developing countries with little say in decisions
- People with HIV: Experience additional problems, e.g. nutritious food and medical services
- Orphans and vulnerable children: Households headed by children taking care of younger siblings
- Production types: Landless people, pastoralists or farmers with irrigated land
- Vulnerable farmers: Target farmers with less than two hectares of land



## Serving the needs of specific groups

- Identify key challenges faced by these groups.
- **Design customized solutions** to meet the needs of men and women in these groups.
- Integrate support measures for specialized groups within the project design.
- Allocate sufficient budget to support specific groups.
- Hire staff with training and experience in dealing with the target groups and support gender-balanced hiring.
- Hire women and younger people as staff and make sure they have the skills needed to work with the clients.





## Lesson 5: Ensuring sustainability





### Outcomes

### After this lesson, you will be able to:

- Explain why handouts are generally not a good idea.
- List three categories of assets and skills and put different assets into these categories.
- Describe how to manage the transfer of assets and skills to increase the likelihood that the project will be sustainable.





### **Overview**

### **Lesson 5 covers the following content:**

- The reasons for things stopping when a project ends
- Planning for the long-term
- Keeping handouts to a minimum
- Managing skills transfers and different types of assets
- Progressing from emergency to development
- Supporting local businesses



- Unwillingness to pay for inputs:
   People are reluctant to pay for inputs, because at are used to getting them for free.
- Free inputs:

Once the free inputs stop, some groups see no reason to exist.

### • Lack of alternative suppliers:

Local people often have nowhere else to go for the inputs and services.





## **Keeping handouts to a minimum**

- Make agreements on coinvestments for building physical structures, include in-kind contributions to the activities, or food or cash for work schemes.
- Survey business services

   and identify where local
   services are weak or do
   not exist







## **Keeping handouts to a minimum (Continued)**

- Plan how to strengthen existing services or encourage them to extend their support to smallholders.
- Do not give inputs directly to farmers. Rather provide them with vouchers to buy inputs from local dealers.







## **Planning for the long-term**

### Ways of planning for long-term:

- Start with a business mindset.
- Do not pay people to participate.
- Do not give free handouts.
- Do not try to move too fast.
- Charge for inputs and services and include hidden costs.
- Build local businesses.
- Provide training in core skills.
- Help community members prepare for what will happen when the project ends.



- Skills, consumables and durable assets are often used in multiple-disciplinary projects.
- Goods and services provided to rural communities:
- Skills transfer, e.g. new planting technique(s)
- Consumable assets, e.g. seeds and fertilizer
- Durable assets, e.g. buildings and equipment



- Skills refer to the knowledge, capacities and attitudes required to carry out a particular farming activity.
- People with skills increase the knowledge and organization of group members and the community.
- Most skills can be transferred relatively easily to other people.





**Examples:** Fertilizer, seed and medicines for livestock.

# Consumables can be purchased locally from:

- Traders
- Input suppliers
- Banks
- Money lenders
- Extension services





## **Consumable assets (Continued)**

### The project should:

- Charge the full cost for consumable assets if possible
- Use vouchers via local service providers, for example
- Provide free consumables in small test amounts and as a temporary demonstration





## **Durable assets: Machinery, buildings, land**

### The project should:

- Charge the full cost if possible.
- Require the community to **coinvest**.
- Provide such assets only on the basis of an agreed business plan.
- Decide on the **terms of transfer** for physical assets.
- Give clear **guidance** on how to manage and maintain durable assets.





## Asset transfer can be managed in one of the following ways:

- Short-term asset delivery linked to a plan
- Vouchers for consumable assets
- Cash
- Co-investment with durable assets
- Co-investment combined with vouchers
- Managed assets





## Managing asset transfers: Short-term asset delivery linked to a plan

- In some cases, farmers need direct support in the form of seeds, fertilizer and tools to start producing.
- Very poor farmers may also need such support to produce enough food to eat.
- In such cases, the project should make it clear that the support will be short-term and that it will help them build the assets they need so they can restart their businesses.





### **Managing asset transfers: Vouchers**

- Vouchers are a market-based way of providing consumable assets.
- The project gives vouchers to the farmers, who use them instead of cash to buy certain types of goods or services from a local service provider.
- Over time, the project should reduce the value of the vouchers.



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### Managing asset transfers: Cash

- To avoid the management cost of vouchers, NGOs often give farmers cash to buy inputs – particularly when the farmers can use mobile money.
- When cash is used, the intervention should be clear about the purpose of the transfer.





### Managing asset transfers: Co-investment with durable assets

**Co-investment** refers to the community contributing a significant part of the investment.

### Example

Farmers may be asked to provide free labor and materials to build terraces and small dams, while the project provides cement and food for the workers.





# Managing asset transfers: Co-investment combined with vouchers: Example

#### **Example**

A local storekeeper and the project may invest in a flour mill. The storekeeper charges farmers to mill their grain, while the project gives vouchers to the poorest people in the community, so that they can use the mill to get their grain milled at a subsidized rate.

It is important that there is a **plan to maintain the asset.** 





### Managing asset transfers: Managed assets

- One way to administer expensive assets (such as a drinking-water system) is through a management committee.
- The management committee manages the operations as a business and charges a fee for the use of the asset.





**Emergency projects** give people a **safety net** and **replenish assets** and services that people have lost in a disaster, e.g. donations of seeds and tools after a flood.







## After the emergency

After the emergency, the transition to the longerterm development phase should be managed carefully, so that people understand they are **not** entitled to free support and handouts.







## **Supporting local businesses**

### A project should:

- Avoid having the project provide services
- Instead, encourage existing businesses to supply these services
- Help local people build businesses that provide the services.







## Lesson 6: Building a training plan





### Outcomes

### After this lesson, you will be able to:

- Describe how to design a training plan.
- Create a training calendar.
- Describe how to monitor training activities.
- List some exit strategies for the project.





### **Lesson 6 covers the following content:**

- Reviewing the project design and timeframe
- Assessing farmers' training needs
- Determining the training targets
- Registering clients and mapping training locations
- Building a training schedule
- Working out the number of field agents
- Developing the detailed training calendar
- Monitoring and evaluating the training
- Exiting the project



## **Steps in planning the training**

- Review the project design
- Check the project timeframe
- Assess the farmers' training needs
- Determine the training targets and sequence of skills training
- Map the training locations
- Update the project organogram
- Review the time required for each course
- Work out how many field agents are needed
- Build a monthly training schedule
- Build an annual training timetable





- Work with the partners to review the project documents and check the targets, e.g. services, locations and staff roles and responsibilities
- Targets and expected outcomes must be realistic and clear.
- The proposal should provide the general targets:
  - $_{\rm O}$  Types and numbers of client to be trained
  - Locations for the training
  - Partners that operate in specific areas



## Check the project timeframe

ID	Teek Neme	Dradaaaaaara	Duration																												
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The following information has to reflect:

- Rainfall: Rainy season, dry season, wet season, etc.
- Main crops: Time when the crops are in the field and harvest time
- Seasonal production times
- Project milestones: Starting date, end-date and the most important deadlines





### The project calendar: Example

Year 1	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Мау	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Νον	Dec
Design										Start	Planning	
Rain			Main rains									
Crops							Planting		Growing	Harvest		




Depending on location and season, farmers my need:

- Support on production
- Help with marketing
- Advice on savings and loans







Use a **needs assessment survey** to determine the types of training to offer, based on the farmers' specific training needs.







# Determine training targets and sequence of the skills training

#### Work out:

- The number and types of client groups
- Types of training they should receive

Depending on the project design and farmers' training needs, you may decide to:

- Train all the clients in all the skills; or
- Offer certain skills to different sub-sets of clients.





# Determine training targets and sequence of the skills training: Example





### **Register clients to keep track of training**

- Give each client a unique identification number.
- Use this information to plan and monitor who in a household receives what type of training.
- Create digital records that the field agents can update by using mobile devices or a computer.
- Having the information in digital form:
  - o Makes it easy to locate the groups on a map
  - o Monitor the groups over time
  - Allows you to assess the effectiveness of different combinations of training events on outcomes.



- A **control group** is a group of people who have not received any interventions from the project.
- A treatment group is the group of clients who do receive training interventions.
- Using treatment and control groups makes it possible to show a statistically significant difference between the two groups when the data are analyzed.
- Typically, there should be as many people in the control groups as in the treatment groups.



Mapping the training locations helps you to:

- Coordinate the training efforts
- Plan the budgets and manage monitoring activities
- The training locations map becomes a management tool, because it:
- Shows the partners' areas of responsibility
- Shows the locations of farmers' groups and/or training events
- Shows the sites of markets and project activities
- Helps you to monitor the distances and costs of delivering services





#### **Example of a training locations map**







#### **Review the organogram (staffing chart) and:**

- Decide who will be responsible for each type of activity and where they will be located
- Review the staff members' tasks and responsibilities
- Evaluate the capacity of staff members, so that you can plan any extra training they may need or hire extra staff





#### **Project organogram: Example**





### **Build a monthly training schedule**

A field agent should be able to deliver **two or three sessions** to a group each month, depending on the travel time between the locations of the groups.







### Monthly training schedule: Example

	Week 1				Week 2			Week 3				Week 4								
	м	т	w	Th	F	м	т	w	Th	F	м	т	w	Th	F	м	т	w	Th	F
Group 1	3					3					3									
Group 2	3					3					3									
Group 3		3					3					3								
Group 4		3					3					3								
Group 5			3					3					3			Off	Office debrief, reporting			ting
Group 6			3					3					3				and training			
Group 7				3					3					3						
Group 8				3					3					3						
Group 9					3					3					3					
Group 10					3					3					3					

3 = Number of hours taught

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SMART Skills courses typically last **1–3 hours,** depending on the situation, the capacity of the field agent and the nature of the groups.

Training a group in a single set of skills may take between 3 and 15 months.

**Example:** The savings and loans training is expected to take 12 months if the groups meet once a week:

A preparatory period of 1–3 weeks
A training period of 2 weeks to 2 months
A monitoring phase of up to 11 months



### Work out the number of field agents needed

- Write a clear scope of work for the field agents, showing details of their training tasks and the target numbers of farmers over the life of the project.
- Start by working out the training capacity for one field agent and then multiply this basic unit to reach the required project targets.
- Show the following on your organogram:
- The number of field agents and the types of training
- Agents specializing in training on specific subjects
- Local volunteers who will be part of the training



### Table showing the number of field agents needed

Year 1:	Each field agent starts with an intensive training of five groups of approximately of 25 farmers each.
Year 2:	Each field agent works with five additional groups.
Year 3:	The field agent provides only maintenance support to the first-year groups, which will free up sufficient time to support five new groups.





## Showing the number of field agents needed on the organogram



The semester system means that the field agents offer one (or maybe two) courses at a time and these are the only courses offered during this period.

Different types of training can **overlap**.







- Field agents can focus on one skill.
- Managers have to monitor only one or two courses at once and, therefore, they can give more meaningful feedback.
- Field agents can **compare progress** and results across an entire project for a particular.
- It is easier to monitor the results and progress in a single skill.
- The project can measure knowledge uptake across the entire project or area, rather than group-by-group.



#### Example

The project team may decide that one group of field agents only focus on financial skills, in which case, the financial field agents will train client groups:

- Savings and loans and financial education
- Linkage to formal financial institutions
- Business management

To complement the financial field agents, another group of field agents will focus on group management, natural resource management and production and innovation.

## Practical considerations: The local situation and the season

#### Natural resources first

The land may be so degraded that farmers have to solve natural-resource problems before they can start work on production and marketing.

#### Seasonal issues

Plan your training calendar according to the seasonal nature of farming activities and tasks.





#### Detailed annual training timetable for each farmers' group

Year 1	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Design										Start	Plann	ing
Rain								Main	rains			
Crops												
Finance	Savings and loans- intensive training				Les	Less intensive Monitoring						
Agro- enterprise					Intens	sive	Less intensive					
Natural resources							Le inter	ess nsive	Inten- sive			
Innovation					Less intensive							



## Monitoring and evaluation: The evaluation survey

- The evaluation survey is done three times during a project life:
- Baseline survey:
   Beginning of a project
- Midline survey:
  - Mid-term in the project
- Endline survey:

End-of-project survey





#### The sentinel survey:

- Focuses on the changes of a selected number of househoulds and groups
- Allows the field agents to monitor the progress of specific groups





### Advantages of using computers to collect data

- The data can be entered in the field and do not have to be retyped.
- The data can be used to calculate benchmark information for farmers.
- Information can easily be shared with the farmers.







# Advantages of using computers to collect data (Continued)

- The data can be uploaded automatically.
- The data can be backed up automatically, avoiding the risk of losing information.
- Staff and managers can instantly see check the progress of the project.





## **Collating and analyzing collected data**

The following table shows the scores in a 0–10 point rating scale for one farmer group over five years in the project life.

	Group organization	Savings and loans	Natural resources management	Marketing	Innovation
Year 1	1	1	0	0	0
Year 2	1	3	3	4	2
Year 3	3	4	5	5	2
Year 4	5	7	5	7	3
Year 5	6	8	8	9	3



For example, the following web diagram for the foregoing table shows that:

- The group has made good progress over time from a very humble beginning.
- It is strong in marketing, natural resource management and savings and loans.
- Innovation is a weak point is in innovation: the group has made little progress in this since the second year.
- Group organization is also relatively weak.



## **Presenting data: The web diagram showing changes in** a farmer's group skills over time



## Monitoring group enterprises by means of CRS Farmbook software

- The field agent enters data into a computer.
- The data are uploaded to a central database on the Internet.
- Once it is uploaded, the data are processed and can be shared with the people on the project.
- The information can be used immediately by community members and farmers.



#### **Purpose of Farmbook**

#### **Purpose of Farmbook**





#### **Farmbook topics and applications**





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### The end of a project: Questions to ask

- Have the local people learned the skills to plan and manage a profitable agro-enterprise?
- Will they have access to sufficient financial resources to invest in the activities?
- Do they know how to save to support their agroenterprise?
- Will there be local services and service providers to supply essential services?

**Exit strategies** are designed to address these questions.





Plan from the beginning what will happen when the project ends and to decide:

- How long is the project expected to last?
- What will happen to the groups that the project has established and trained?

Activities	ctivities Year 1		Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Start of project						
Activity 1						
Activity 2						
Activity 3	-					
Activity 4						
Activity 5						
End of project						





### **Exit strategy 1: Support by existing service providers**

- During the project, farmers' groups build up agroenterprises.
- The agro-enterprises are linked to private-sector service providers such as input suppliers, traders, mobile banks.
- The groups pay for the **inputs** and **services** that these provide.
- At the end of the project, the groups have firm ties with the service providers and no longer need your help.



## Exit strategy 2: Helping the community mobilizers to set up service

- The project starts by training genderappropriate community mobilizers to provide services to farmers.
- At first, the **project subsidizes part of their costs**, but gradually the subsidy is reduced.
- By the end of the project, the farmers are paying the full cost and the mobilizers have established viable businesses to provide such services.





## **Exit strategy 3: Continued support to service providers**

- The project stops providing support directly to farmers' groups, but continues to work with and support private-sector service providers.
- The project supplies subsidized inputs via these providers for a designated period.
- The subsidy is reduced over time as the farmers learn to reinvest their profits in their enterprises.




## Exit strategy 4: Use of mobile money

In many countries, farmers use their **mobile phones** to:

- Transfer cash
- Access new financial services, such as micro-insurance and life insurance







## Exit strategy 4: Use of mobile money (Continued)

- Development organizations can use mobile phones to support credit and extension services.
- It is important to understand who has access to mobile money and how this will affect different target groups.







## In this module, you have learned:

- The five SMART skills used in the skills-based approach to agricultural development
- The development project team and participatory training methods
- Categories of people in local communities
- The design of a training plan the calendar
- The monitoring of training activities and the design of exit strategies

