

The Impact of Social Approaches on Agricultural Technology

Dissemination <Part 4>

Effects on Securing Cultivation Funds and Maintaining Motivation

The Northern Uganda Farmers' Livelihood Improvement Project (NUFLIP), in which AAI was involved from 2015 to 2021, focused on two core pillars: Market-Oriented Agriculture (MOA) and Quality of Life (QOL) Improvement. This series highlights how the social approach, Improvement of Quality of Life, affected the adoption and dissemination of MOA technologies.

Securing Cultivation Funds

Market-oriented vegetable production requires certain financial inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides. Therefore, securing funds for these inputs from the sales of the previous season is essential to continue market-oriented vegetable cultivation. However, local farmers originally had little concept of "investing money in agriculture." Many farmers used all their income to purchase daily necessities or livestock at the beginning. Even some farmers who kept money for seeds tended to postpone buying fertilizers and pesticides, saying, "We'll buy them later."

In vegetable cultivation, however, the timing of fertilizer application and pest and disease control is crucial. Once the need arises, it is already too late to prepare the funds. Changing this mindset took considerable effort.

The training on household cash management, conducted under the QOL component, was very effective in addressing this issue. This training was originally designed to help families identify their expenses and use income from vegetable production wisely for their household needs. By including "necessary costs for vegetable production" in the list of expected expenditures, the training also contributed greatly to the sustainability of vegetable cultivation practices.

Maintaining Motivation

For local farmers, market-oriented vegetable cultivation promoted by NUFLIP was very different from their traditional food crop production such as maize or sesame. It required intensive management, higher risk, and greater financial investment. Although the project was designed to

keep these within acceptable limits for smallholder farmers, it still required a major shift in mindset for those used to traditional crops. Therefore, maintaining motivation—to learn new techniques, manage fields intensively, and continue vegetable production after the project ended—was key to ensuring that the introduced technologies would take root.

The family goal setting training under the QOL component played an important role in enhancing and sustaining motivation. Participants were asked to draw their family's "dreams for the next five and ten years." Under the theme "How will you use the income from vegetable production?" families discussed and drew their dreams together, then presented them to the group.

In the local culture men traditionally decided how to use household income, but many lacked a clear understanding of expenses, leading to poor planning and little saving for the future. The training aimed to let family members, both men and women, have an opportunity to discuss how to use vegetable income more effectively for their happiness. Rather than changing traditional gender roles, it encouraged families to make decisions and plan together.

The training also helped raise motivation for vegetable cultivation by allowing families to share and visualize their dreams. It was held shortly before sowing, when expectations were high. By picturing a better future together, participants became more enthusiastic and cooperative in their work. The impact lasted for years. When the project visited them later, many proudly said, "Just as we drew back then, we built a house with vegetable income!" Some even still displayed those drawings on their home walls as a reminder of their shared dream.



A scene from household financial management training.



A scene from "Family Goal Setting" training, where family members discuss and draw their dreams together.