



3.4 PSAM as Transformative Tool to Improving Agricultural Service Provision: Case of FISP in Zambia

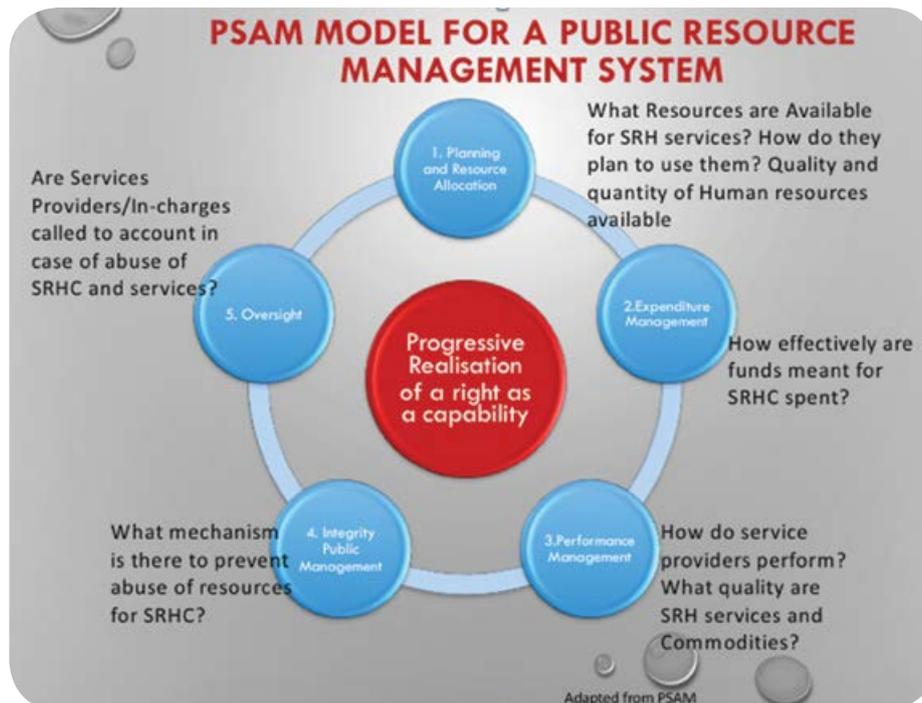
3.4.1 Project Start up

Agriculture forms the bedrock of every developing nation's development agenda as it has the potential to absorb the excess surplus labour. In Zambia over 65.5% people live below the poverty datum line with women and children being the worst victims of rural poverty that stands at over 75% in comparison with their urban counterparts (65%). With limited employment opportunities and the quest to survive and feed their families, local farmers not only contribute to the national food basket but also ensure availability of staple food, its affordability and utilization. The quest for food security at household and national level begins with rural based farmers especially women who account for 65% of the labour in this sector.

The social accountability process forms the centrepiece of how the PSA project was implemented and targeted. In Zambia, Mongu district specifically, the PSA consortium through the lead of Action Aid Zambia sub-granted the Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR) to build capacity of small scale farmers in Mongu to utilise the PSAM model. This enables them to voice their concerns on the bottlenecks in the existing Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP) by examining the efficiency, gaps in delivery of inputs in view of delayed delivery of farming inputs and lack of transparency in the whole process.

This documentation highlights the role of the PSAM model in generating evidence for small holder female farmers to effectively engage with duty bearers in improving the delivery of the FISP in the Western Province of Zambia and Mongu districts respectively under the PSA supported project.

PSAM model asserts that every state functions in five interrelated steps in managing public resources namely, Strategic Planning and Resource Allocation, Expenditure Management, Performance Management, Public Integrity and Public Oversight. These processes are interrelated for the purpose of ensuring that citizenry progressively realise their Rights as a lived experience.



PSAM model argues that citizens have a right to social accountability which asserts:

- that every state is obliged to justify and explain the way it manages and uses its public resources (PRM) decisions and actions and take timely corrective action where weaknesses in the process are identified.
- that all citizens have the right to demand these justifications and explanations from the state when it fails to provide them adequately and corrective action where required.

3.4.2. Key Activities

3.4.2.1 Stakeholder analysis and engagement of target beneficiaries

The main thrust of the stakeholder analysis was to facilitate identification of key and strategic partners, individuals and institutions that are critical and relevant to the success of the project interventions. The stakeholder inventory and subsequent analysis involved identification and interrogation of relevant organizations, existing structures, relevant government line ministries that are aligned towards responding to the needs and services of the small scale farmers in the districts.

Social mobilization of district farmer associations, media houses, line ministries like Department of Agriculture specifically the Provincial Agriculture and District Agriculture Officers and traditional leadership especially chiefs and headmen was key to the success of the project. Youth and women alike were mobilized through existing structures like village meetings, women and farmer support groups respectively. The traditional leadership acted as an interface in the social accountability work between the implementing agencies and the communities given the location of the project.

3.4.2.2 District Level Capacity Building using PSAM

A five day district training in SAM and PSAM was conducted using the localised PSAM modules with specific focus on agriculture but focused on performance management at district level. Training participants included representatives from women small scale farmer organisation, farmers unions, media, duty bearers (DACOs and agricultural extension officers), and traditional leaders' representatives.

Capacity building using the PSAM model was also another conduit used in the discourse to achieve the desired results. In this context, the PSA project defined its capacity building as a continuous process of adjusting people's attitudes, values and organizational practices while building up appropriate knowledge and skills on PRM particularly on agricultural service delivery focusing on the five processes which include, planning and resource allocation, expenditure management, performance management, public integrity and public oversight. Thus the project worked towards changing knowledge and skills barriers and ability to challenge, question and demand for services at individual, organizational and broader levels from the rights perspective. The project was able to address the individuals' capacities by improving their perceptions and advocacy skills thereby enabling them to function efficiently.

3.4.2.3 Evidence for Advocacy using PSAM

Using the knowledge gained through the district training using PSAM model, the small holder farmers were able to use different tools at community level including the community scorecards to generate evidence around FISP which they in turn used to develop community level advocacy action plans.

3.4.2.4: District Interface Meetings with Duty Bearers

With support from CSPR, the small holder farmers, were able to convene district interface meetings with the district farmer associations, media houses, line ministries like Department of Agriculture specifically the Provincial Agriculture and District Agriculture Officers and traditional leadership especially chiefs and headmen on FISP.

3.4.3. Evidence of a Good Practice

Relevance

In Zambia, the agriculture sector is the highest employer in the informal sector. However, despite rural and vulnerable women and youth being the key contributors to the survival of the sector; and largely contributing to the national food basket and balance of payment position emanating from export of maize and other crops, farmers experience complex challenges. Many of these challenges are related to poor public resource management and the limited participation of the citizenry in the PRM processes. Challenges farmers face include: delayed delivery of farming inputs, poor access to out-put marketing opportunities and poor accountability of services and records by the key stakeholders-Ministry of Finance and Agriculture. In Mongu like

many other areas in the country, beneficiaries complained about the e-voucher system. For instance, farmers were not getting their farming inputs on time. Apart from that, the records of beneficiaries were marred by irregularities that included deliberate omission of names. The absence of a well-defined input and output marketing system compounded with imbalances in power relations between duty bearers and the beneficiaries. The local farmers especially women were often left at the vagaries of exploitation. It was reported that some agro dealers charged with the responsibility to deliver inputs to farmers at agreed prices, often exploited the beneficiaries of the e-voucher system by supplying fertilizer and seed in lower quantities than prescribed by their vouchers.

“Agro dealers were unnecessarily hiking prices of their commodities by taking advantage of the porous system and this was negatively affecting farm produce and food hampering food security, when we were taken through the PSAM model for PRM our eyes were open to voice out against this...” —Small scale farmer

The approach of the PSA project, based on the PSAM model of social accountability monitoring, was necessary because it addressed the needs and the concerns of the people in quest to improve their livelihood, reproductive health and general wellbeing.

Effectiveness

Mongu district has a very high illiteracy rate (Zambia Ministry of Education Statistical Bulletins 2014). This has a direct bearing on the people's awareness of their rights to public goods and services and their capacity for holding accountable public officials who are duty-bearers in public resource management. All duty-bearers interviewed prior to implementation of the project acknowledged and lamented the low awareness of rights, and low engagement of the public in public resource management in the district.

Key stakeholders confirmed that the project model (PSAM) was in alignment with the national policies towards inclusiveness and decentralisation. This made the duty-bearers at district level good allies in the implementation of the SDC project. To ensure effectiveness, using PSAM, the project conducted training for district level duty-bearers from agriculture and health sectors as well as to local government. Training was also extended to civil society organisations involved in implementing the project in Mongu. Training was also conducted for community level participants from Mawawa and Kaande communities of Mongu district.

The duty-bearers and project implementers reported notable improvement in rights awareness among community members and improved involvement in public resource management from planning to providing oversight using the right based approach. Despite the challenge in quantification, community leaders claimed that the project model (PSAM) had been beneficial because after the intervention, they were “now bold enough” to approach government officers especially who had the job of providing or ensuring some services to the community. For example, they claimed that working with the DC, the farmers had managed to create a fortnightly market for farmers where members come to sell various farm produce. District Farmers Association leaders reported that, there has been a general increase in community engagement with the



Images: SAFAIDS (2018)

District Agriculture Coordinating Officer (DACO) and especially with agricultural camp officers who are closer to the grassroots. In the meantime, with the help of the DC, the farmers are seeking a more permanent market in Kasima area of Mongu. The farmers were also in the process of registering the association and engaged Shoprite to be supplying produce to farmers to the supermarkets. This follows from the training that emphasised farming as a business and not merely as subsistence.

Thus through PSAM model, local farmers were empowered with knowledge and skills to enable them identify challenges in their farming activities, how and when to engage policy makers and duty bearers at community, district, provincial and national level. PSAM proved that it is a transformative tool for social and political change as it enhances the voices of the farmers.

“In the past we could not complain because we did not know our rights, we were in the dark, but after undergoing the training in Social Accountability, we knew that we now had the power to stand up for our rights and question both the Agro dealers and Agricultural Officials”. —Local Farmer, FGD participant

Cost Effectiveness

The PSA project started off with training of stakeholders at district government level and at community level using the PSAM model. The rationale for training community members was to ensure cascading of the knowledge acquired to other members of the community. Fifty-one persons were trained from the selected communities. Government officials were enthusiastic to participate in the PSA project as this aligned with their own mandates. For example, the Mongu District Director of Planning welcomed the project PSAM model as it was in line with the local government decentralising plans aimed at encouraging participation of communities in planning processes, identification of areas of concern and the suggestion of solutions.

In cascading utilisation of the PSAM model, the project did not employ its own personnel but utilised personnel from the stakeholder organisations and community members. Furthermore, where necessary, equipment from stakeholder organisations was used rather than procuring equipment such as computers or printers for the project. CSPR used their own bicycles for use by facilitators while the project's knowledge and information were disseminated for free by the local radio stations. Consequently, there were no expenses on salaries, equipment, and information dissemination. Involvement of the district council including the recruitment of a “young” councillor also meant that council facilities could be used by the project at no charge. These aforementioned cost-saving measures meant that a large number of beneficiaries were reached by the project at minimum cost compared to a scenario where the project would pay for its own employees, equipment, radio airtime, and facilities such as venues for meetings.

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Ethical Soundness

It can be fairly asserted that the very essence of the PSAM in PRM for FISP was to ensure upholding of ethical standards by the duty-bearers toward the vulnerable right-holders. Participation in the PSAM training and in the project's activities and interventions is completely voluntary, that is, based on participants' informed consent. CSPR, one of the implementers of the project, adopts the Human Rights Based Approach to intervention (HRBA) and their personnel are adequately trained in HRBA. Essentially CSPR overall aim is promoting human rights for the vulnerable and it avoids rights violations in its own modus operandi. The core ethical values of the implementing partners attest to the project's emphasis on ethical soundness. At the centre of the PSAM model is progressive realisation of a right as a capability.

There was evidence of inclusiveness and gender equality in the implementation of PSA model. The PSAM training of district-level officials showed a bias towards men with only five females trained against twelve males. However, this was likely a result of the inherent or prior gender imbalance in senior district positions as selection of trainees was based on occupying a relevant duty-bearer position within the district government hierarchy of the respective departments. This interpretation is corroborated by the gender composition in the selection where pre-existing structures had no bearing. For community training participants, there were eighteen women to sixteen men. Thus the project in itself can be said to have ensured gender equality.

The beneficiaries are included on the basis of vulnerability. Young people, women, the disabled and people living with HIV and AIDS (PLHIV) are some of the vulnerable groups targeted by the project model. This can be seen from the inclusion of the Network of the Zambian People living with HIV/AIDS (NZP+), a national organization for PLHIV. The NZP+ is a Zambian NGO whose aim is to improve the quality of life for PLHIV through the provision of Support through support groups and also represent PLHIV on various local platforms on various advocacy issues. However, there is an important caveat to this prioritization of the vulnerable as one female District Farmers Association leader highlighted. She said, "Sometimes we are scared to give seeds to the vulnerable because the seed may simply go to waste". She elaborated that they do not distribute farm inputs to the vulnerable simply because they are vulnerable. They ensure that those vulnerable people who are identified to receive inputs have the capacity to utilize them. Otherwise the vulnerable may end up misusing or wasting the valuable and scarce resources.

Further, linkages for additional services through the District Farmer Associations defined the other part of capacity building for on-going mentorship and technical support provision. At a broader level, the model ensured that through involvement of key stakeholders, systems at all levels were strengthened like adherence to standards, transparency in the processes, resource allocation and responding to the needs of the farmers. District Farmer Associations, Clubs and other community based organizations working with the farmers benefited in the way they manage their records, promoted equitable participation by appreciating local knowledge of youth and women, improved intra community linkages for services such as FISP. In addition, through working with diverse spectrum of stakeholders, there was deliberate promotion of organizational learning through group meetings, information sharing and shared visions and goals of small scale farmers.

Relevance

Although socio-economic rights are an entitlement to the citizens of Zambia, the majority are neither aware of these rights nor do they have the capacity to demand from the office bearers the discharge of their duties. It is this gap that necessitated the establishment of PSAM. In the case of Mongu, this aberration has been duly noted by the officials in Mongu and attributed by some key stakeholders to high illiteracy levels as well as poor terrain that prevent rural communities from accessing or demanding services.

As noted above, the PSA model is in tandem with the national policy as espoused in the Seventh National Development Plan and in the decentralisation policy. Government slogan is “Leave no one behind” in the development process. The Director of Planning also underscored the importance of having local beneficiaries involved throughout the resource management cycle in order for decentralisation to meaningfully materialise. The model therefore provides a crucial missing link in government fulfilling its duty of ensuring socio-economic rights for its citizens. Citizens’ involvement from planning to providing oversight is essential for realising Zambia’s national policy. Development cannot be merely for the people but must be by the people as well. Although the idea of public accountability is part of government policy, it is empty rhetoric without capacity building for communities. PSA project fills the gap through provision of PSAM training. Participants were selected from different communities of Mongu including remote ones to ensure the knowledge of citizen’s rights and the need to demand from and monitor government officers reaches as many people as possible.

The relevance of the PSAM model is evident from the report of the scoping undertaken prior to implementation. All government officials from different departments welcomed the idea of working closely with right holders. These officers included the District Commissioner (district administration), the District Planning Officer (council, local government), the District Medical Officer (Ministry of Health), and

The Mongu DC brought to our attention that the district is facing challenges pertaining to social accountability interventions and emphasized that this project will bring about the desired change so as to ensure transformation of the lives of the people of Mongu. — Scoping Report

the District Agriculture Officer (Ministry of Agriculture). All highlighted the existing gap in community participation in development and health programmes undertaken by their respective departments. They all bemoaned the lack of participation by citizens which they attributed to high illiteracy levels as well as limited understanding of PRM. They therefore viewed the PSAM model as complementing their own work by building community capacity for accountability and participation and in being able to reach the hard-to-reach parts of the district. They highlighted that the community were the intended beneficiaries of their own programmes and the PSA would help in community buy-in or involvement into the government programmes and hence contributing to their effectiveness and efficiency.

It was not just government departments that appreciated the need for the PSAM model imbedded in a project but also other players including CSOs. The recognition by these agents is important particularly because they are not merely civil society organisations but putative beneficiaries of sound PRM outputs as well.

Replicability

PSAM model is versatile and malleable to be applicable to diverse socio-cultural, political, and economic context. As highlighted above, accountability is an essential ingredient of democracy and development. The project's modus operandi involves:

1. Identification of needy communities and partners.
2. PSAM training of partners and members of targeted communities.

PSAM model is easily replicable in the other provinces and districts in Zambia. All provinces fall under the same national policy and have the same government structures including councils, DC, and DACO. In addition, many partner civil society organisations also have country-wide presence in provinces and districts. Where the ones in Mongu are not present, similar organisations can be found to partner with. The only exception to this may be the new districts that have been created in the last eight years. However, many of the newly districts recently created are within the proximity of the older districts they broke away from. It is therefore feasible to partner with civil society organisations in older districts nearest to the new ones.

Replicability depends to a large extent on existing conditions where the project is to be implemented. Equally important is record-keeping of the interventions in current projects. The Mongu PSA has shown some evidence of records that would be vital when replicating elsewhere. These include the scoping report, the PSAM training report, Documentation, such as this one, is important for project replication. Interventions elsewhere can learn not only from the lessons learnt and the successes of previous interventions but from its challenges as well. This documentation is therefore an important recipe for replication.



Images: SAfAIDS (2018)

Innovativeness

A new project has diminished value if it seeks to reinvent the wheel. Duplication of interventions can be a waste of human, financial, and material resources. A project must exhibit sufficient innovation to qualify as a Best Practice. Unlike many other interventions against human rights abuse and poverty, the PSAM model does not have as its primary goal provisioning of material goods to vulnerable communities, or helping them case by case. Instead, its main aim is to provide the intangible benefits of building capacity among communities for positive and active engagement in the development cycle especially at the local level. This capacity-building project seeks to raise awareness among communities of their socio-economic rights as owed them by the state through district-level officers. The project further seeks to train via the cascading model, poor communities with knowledge, skills, tactics, and techniques of how to demand their rights from the duty-bearers.

The innovativeness of the model was duly affirmed by the DACO. He said PSAM was unique because it was not a top-down approach but involved beneficiaries from the onset. He further pointed out that unlike other projects, the project relied on training not only government officials but representatives from communities near and far. This gave the project an unparalleled reach as the approach ensured knowledge acquired reached the remoted parts of Mongu. He reported notable boldness and enthusiasm in the targeted communities in how they brought out their health challenges. His views were echoed by community member. The community members said that unlike such interventions PSAM model empowers them with a voice to make them fearless to demand for services from government workers.

Sustainability

The PSAM model is meant to be community-driven; the beneficiaries are empowered to demand their own socio-economic rights and to provide oversight on public resource management. Community participation/involvement and ownership is therefore vital to the sustainability of the project. This is augmented by maintaining and fostering of partnerships through networking with government departments and civil society organisations. The PSAM training, has allowed for community members to recognise and assume ownership of public resources and to demand accountability from government duty-bearers. This may allow for some sustainability provided key partnerships and networks are maintained with civil society organisations.

The approach guarantees continuity because the project has built the capacity of key stakeholders and the vulnerable groups in particularly. There is also evidence of strong synergies of key players such as the government line ministries, traditional leadership , women and youth, District Farmers Association and Media houses.

Capacity building of key stakeholders has enhanced their knowledge and skills levels on the how they can engage in advocacy and constructive dialogue around challenges facing peasant and small scale farmers in Mongu. In addition, multisector approach will ensure that resource leveraging, skills and knowledge transfer continues among the

stakeholders. The fact that the model was applied among a multilayer of stakeholders who understood their roles and responsibilities in the overall project implementation, the knowledge and skills built will continue bearing positive fruits. For instance the District Farmers Association worked closely with ESAF and CSPR in facilitating linkages between DFAs and District Women Associations using PSAM.

3.4.4 Impact

The PSAM model was applied in building capacity of small scale farmers by equipping them with the skills that enabled them to demand for improved services especially on delivery of farming inputs. The beneficiaries were able to constantly hold duty bearers to account on various issues related to their livelihood-farming. For instance farmers demonstrated knowledge and skills on how to speak out on matters which they felt were deterring their effective participation in farming activities via Radio programs. Premised on these positive changes and the evidence generated, it can be deduced that PSAM as an approach has demonstrated that it is a transformative tool that has power to build the self-confidence and self-esteem of small scale farmers as they are able to assert themselves and demand for quality services using evidence based proof.

***“Farmers are more empowered and know the channels and procedures to communicate their grievances and able to speak from an informed perspective”
—FGD participant, Nyambe***

Some farmers had never had the opportunity and chance of interacting with government officials but through this program, both parties that consisted of duty bearers and beneficiaries are now able to openly engage in frank dialogue on farmer’s rights especially to hold government officials to account on their promises.

Furthermore, the project model brought a wealth of knowledge and skills through working with the Media and District Farmer Associations. Building the capacity of the media in PSAM ensured that voices and concerns of the farmer in both districts received greater attention and actions were immediate in most aspects. For instance, farmers in Mongu through the radio programmes were able to advocate and demand for the government to withdraw farmers from the FISP programme and to be enrolled in the conventional Farmer Distribution System (FDS) after realization that the FISP approach using the E-voucher system had structural systems that delayed timely delivery of inputs thereby delaying planting among small scale farmers. As a result government reverted to the old system of physically delivering the inputs. This related the farmers and gave them confidence in their advocacy work.

The PSAM model contributed towards transformation of the culture and structural design of organizations such as District Farmers Associations, Media institutions and Community Agricultural Monitoring Programs (CAMP) to become real learning structures based on their improved way of doing things particularly becoming more receptive to criticism and acting on matters brought to their attention by the small scale farmers.



Image: SAfAIDS (2016)

3.4.5 Some Key Programme Success Stories

Improved recognition of gender balance especially women's rights and their voices in planning, implementation and evaluation of the farmer input program. Through interface meetings with duty bearers the farmers raised attention over an insurance company that had been reported to have failed to pay back the K100 insurance among the 48,000 small scale farmers. Breeze management organized outside broadcasting with the government and farmers in Kamulanga area and beamed the interface meeting live on radio thereby giving all stakeholders a chance to contribute on the matter.

3.4.6 Lessons Learnt

It has been learnt that if media houses have their capacity built on critical issues that concern vulnerable groups, their knowledge and skills can be applied in their day to day work thereby making them conduits through which effective advocacy and actions can be attained.

The PSAM model generally was well received in Western Province at all levels. There is need to ensure that in phase 2, for capacity building of duty bearers and right orders to be extended to other areas in the province.

It has been learned that when duty bearers know their obligation to explain and justify decisions and actions taken in the PRM for agriculture, coupled with evidence based and non-confrontational social accountability, they will be more effective in delivery of agricultural related services.

Using the right based approach in the utilisation of the PSAM proved an effective entry point to acceptability of it by both the duty bearers and right holders.

The model was appreciated even beyond the implementing sites thereby creating over-demand in contrast with limited resources available. This made some beneficiaries to volunteer their time by visiting adjacent communities where they started teaching fellow women and youth thereby creating high expectations for trainings and other programs among the newly incorporated beneficiaries.

3.4.7 Conclusion

Using the score card, PSAM as Transformative Tool to Improving Agricultural Service delivery in Zambia is a good practice that need some adjustments for improvements. Some of the aspects can be replicated with adjustments in different setting and scales as it scored more than 67% on the criteria of validating best practice.

3.4.8 Recommendations for Moving Forward

- Continuity is compromised because the training provided to government officers may not be retained by the departments once the trained person is no longer at the station due to transfer, morbidity, or mortality. The documentation team for example had challenges getting information from council because the Director of Planning who attended the training had been transferred to another district.
- There is need to scale up training of the media using PSAM in PRM especially for agricultural service delivery.
- Need for translated and simplified modules of the PSAM model targeting communities



Image: SA/AIDS (2016)