

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION
FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES



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**COURSE : AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION
APPROACHES IN FOOD SECURITY
AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMME**

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MASTERS IN FOOD SECURITY AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE (PRO)

QUESTION 2

Design a sustainable extension program for your organization that promotes household food security in Gokwe South District, Zimbabwe

Introduction

According to International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Zimbabwe is among the Sub-Saharan African nations with the worst rates of food insecurity. Smallholder farmers, who make up the bulk of the population, depend on rain-fed agriculture for both food and nutrition security. Rural residents are more susceptible to shocks connected to climate change since they depend on rain-fed crops. In addition, inadequate soil fertility, a lack of agricultural expertise, loan accessibility, and subpar market performance all have an impact on food security (IFAD, 2018). Small-holder farmers require credit for inputs, training in best methods for agriculture, and storage technologies to boost their production sustainably, improve their own living standards, and create surpluses that can feed others. (Morleeta, 2016). Gokwe South small holders farmers are no exception. They face several challenges including the hot and dry climate that makes crops and livestock susceptible to pests and diseases; the road infrastructure is poor such that it is a challenge to even travel to Gokwe centre from one village to collect inputs; and farmers rely on rainfall as they cannot afford irrigation equipment (Food and Agriculture Organisation, 2018), just to mention a few.

Program Objectives

1. Empowerment of Smallholder Farmers Through Skills Training: To increase the ability of self-reliance, households should get training and hands-on assistance in income-generating activities, best agricultural practices, and vocational skills (International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), 2019).
2. Promote Open Markets: Promoting commodity exchanges and facilitating trade by means of a robust and transparent trading framework. connecting the market with farmers. In order to promote household well-being, increase availability to nutrient-dense food through sustainable farming methods, food assistance programs, and nutrition education (FAO, 2018).
3. Assisting Small Holder Farmers: Encourage the development of peer groups, support systems, and neighbourhood projects to promote emotional health, social cohesiveness, and group empowerment (FAO, 2018).
4. Build Resilience: Put methods in place to make people more resilient to environmental stressors, health issues, and economic shocks through social service access, savings groups, and health education (Oxfam International, 2020).

Extension Program for Gokwe South Small holder Farmers

1. Skills Development and Training Workshops

- Conduct training on farm space utilisation, to increase productivity.
- Conduct training on good agronomic practices that enhance food security.
- Train farmers on climate smart agriculture (FAO,2019).
- Create awareness on farm mechanization and offer technical knowledge on farm machinery use to improve productivity and food security.
- Sensitise farmers on how to access agricultural loans and treat farming as a business to increase productivity (IFAD,2020).
- Create awareness on operational partnerships. Encouraging small holder farmers in Hurungwe to join forces with other organisations participating in the agriculture industry. Encouraging Farmer to farmer extension, technical mix of skills such as
- Mixing with technical expertise in export markets (IFAD,2020).
- Training farmers on better access to markets, linking farmers with local and external markets.
- Target financial literacy training, seek to nature inclusive agriculture business models that offer potential returns to smallholder farmers of Hurungwe and improve food security (FAO, 2019).
- Conduct training sessions on other income-generating activities, handcraft production, and entrepreneurship, to equip households with practical skills for economic empowerment and enhance food security through increased income (IFAD,2019).

2. Nutrition and Health Education

- Hold seminars on fundamental healthcare procedures, nutrition, and meal planning to encourage healthy living and enhance the general wellbeing of households (IFAD, 2019).

3. Community Nutrition Gardens and Livelihood Projects

- Create community nutrition gardens with the help of farmers who receive garden seed from the president.
- Create and direct beekeeping or poultry operations to increase food production, make money, and advance sustainability (World Food Program, 2019).

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5. Resource allocation and Distribution

- Distribution of Pfumvudza inputs in association with GMB.
- Tracking the holing of the nutritious plots in Pfumvudza. The Pfumvudza program will plant five plots. (sunflower, peanuts, sugar beans, soybeans, and maize). Enhancing productivity and retaining more water through conservative farming increases food security (Zimbabwe Ministry of Agriculture, 2020).
- Allocation of tillage equipment, to smallholder farmers who are operating in groups under the More Food Program.
- Encouraging farmer cooperation and knowledge exchange via cooperatives and farmer groups in order to increase output (Zimbabwe Ministry of Agriculture, 2020).

6. Psychosocial Support Groups

- Establish support groups among homes to promote peer learning, emotional health, and mutual aid, so building a sense of community and belonging (WFP, 2019).

7. Resilience-Building Initiatives

- Introduce loan and savings groups.
- Launch health education programs.
- Availability of social services to increase participants' ability to bounce back from setbacks (Oxfam International, 2019).

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Establish a comprehensive system for tracking program results, evaluating its impact, and getting participant input.
- To guarantee program efficacy and relevance, perform regular stakeholder meetings, focus

groups, and assessments.

- Create channels of communication to gather input and implement changes that will advance the goal of food security (FAO, 2019).

Sustainability Plan

- Encourage collaborations with regional associations, governmental bodies, and civic leaders to guarantee the long-term viability of the program.
- Give program participants the tools they need to assume leadership positions, carry out program activities, and encourage sustainability in their local communities (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2019).

Conclusion

Through the provision of requisite skills, resources, and support networks, this initiative seeks to enhance the food security, livelihood prospects, and general well-being of smallholders in Gokwe South District (IFAD, 2019). Participants will be better prepared to overcome food insecurity, develop resilience, and lead more secure and fulfilling lives through a holistic approach that addresses economic, social, and health-related challenges (WFP, 2020). Ultimately, this will help to strengthen and strengthen the communities in Gokwe South District. Extension officers should not be oblivious to the fact that language can be a barrier in Gokwe south as most people can only speak Shona, strong cultural and gender barriers, and low literacy level amongst farmers (Mucherera, 2019). Therefore, thorough needs assessment and shareholder analysis should be conducted together with gender-sensitive and inclusive approaches and developing context-specific and participatory programs (Mavhura, 2020)

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