



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition • FSN Forum

TEMPLATE FOR SUBMISSIONS

Call for submissions No. 202 • 09.10.2024 – 27.11.2024

➤ <https://www.fao.org/fsnforum/call-submissions/community-engagement-rural-transformation-and-gender-equality>

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS:

Community engagement for inclusive rural transformation and gender equality

The objective of this call for submissions is to collect good practices, experiences, and lessons learnt on the use of community engagement for inclusive rural transformation and gender equality. The initiative, organized by the [Rural Transformation and Gender Equality Division \(ESP\)](#), seeks to gather insights from a diverse range of contributors, both within FAO and from external stakeholders. Its goal is to share knowledge, foster learning, and guide the scaling up of community engagement and community-led collective action to leave no one behind. The call builds on FAO's past efforts in this area, such as the [Community Engagement Days](#) series of webinars.¹



The call for submissions is open until 27 November 2024.

How to take part in this call for submissions:

To take part in this Call for submissions, please [register](#) to the FSN Forum, if you are not yet a member, or “sign in” to your account. Please review the **topic note** to understand the criteria we are considering for this call. If you wish to learn more about community engagement, you may refer to the [background document](#). Once you have completed this submission template, upload it in the box “Post your contribution” on the [call webpage](#), or, alternatively, send it to fsn-moderator@fao.org.

Please keep the length of submissions limited to **1,500 words** and feel also free to attach relevant supporting materials.

¹ The call for submissions is directly aligned with the thematic components of collective action within FAO's Programme Priority Areas (PPAs), specifically Better Life 1 (Gender Equality and Rural Women's Empowerment), Better Life 2 (Inclusive Rural Transformation) and Better Life 3 (Agriculture and Food Emergencies).

Template for submissions

Contact person	Name: Mahabur Rahman Organization/Unit: BRAC International Country: Liberia Email address: mahabur.rahman@brac.net
Name/title of the good practice	Community Based Extension Service Provider (Community Agriculture Promoter-CAP / Community Livestock promoter-CLP)
Where is the good practice taking place? (Multiple selection allowed)	<input type="checkbox"/> Europe and Central Asia <input type="checkbox"/> Latin America and the Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/> North Africa and Near East <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sub-Saharan Africa <input type="checkbox"/> Asia and the Pacific <input type="checkbox"/> North America <input type="checkbox"/> Global
Affiliation	<input type="checkbox"/> Farmer and producer organizations <input type="checkbox"/> Trade Union <input type="checkbox"/> Informal community-based, farmer-based or self-help group <input type="checkbox"/> Research and academia <input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Local/traditional authorities <input type="checkbox"/> Private Sector <input type="checkbox"/> Civil Society Organization <input type="checkbox"/> Intergovernmental Organization (e.g. UN system, World Bank) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Resource Partner/Donor <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)
In which sector(s) and context (s) have you used this community engagement good practice? (Multiple selections allowed)	<input type="checkbox"/> Education <input type="checkbox"/> Health and Sanitation

	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Food production in agrifood systems (please also tick the sub-categories)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Crop cultivation</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Fisheries and aquaculture production</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Livestock</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Forestry</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Agroforestry</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Horticulture</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Apiculture (beekeeping)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Agroecology and sustainable farming practices</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Soil and water management</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Other: _____</i> </p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Post-production in agrifood systems (please also tick the sub-categories)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Processing and value addition</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Marketing and retailing</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Transporting</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Food loss and waste</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Packaging</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Storage</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Distribution</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Other _____</i> </p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Gender Equality</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Climate Action</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Citizenship and Governance</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Social Protection</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Humanitarian and protracted crisis</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Conflict resolution, peace and resilience</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Digital innovation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other sector (please specify) _____</p>
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Who are the financial partners supporting this good practice, if applicable?	Multi donor
<p>1. In a few sentences, summarize your community engagement good practice.</p> <p>In African countries like Liberia, smallholder farmers are often affected by low productivity, high rates of post-harvest loss and livestock mortality and unpredictable weather due to climate change. This can be attributed to a lack of local-level extension services and an absence of systemic interventions to address challenges in the agriculture sector. BRAC drives community engagement by empowering smallholder farmers with training, inputs and tools to become community-based promoters; either Community Agriculture Promoters (CAPs) or Community Livestock Promoters (CLPs). CAPs and CLPs offer technical services, sell seeds, fertilisers and vaccines, provide door-to-door services to underserved smallholder farmers, and help create market linkages. Through female CAPs and CLPs, women farmers have greater accessibility and are better equipped with modern, climate smart agricultural techniques and practices.</p> <p>The community promoters collaborate with farmers to increase their confidence to invest in agriculture and overcome challenges, while also boosting their social dignity and honing leadership skills that benefit their communities as a whole. Research has found this model to be sustainable and that it has largely contributed to increasing agricultural production, leaving a direct impact on the livelihood of the smallholder farmers.</p>	
<p>2. What problem(s) or challenge(s) does your good practice aim to address through community engagement?</p> <p>Smallholder farmers in Liberia face major constraints, including weak institutional support, professional and vocational training, and agricultural advisory services. Farmers also lack and struggle with quality inputs, livestock and crop health protection services, and work with outdated equipment and technologies. Limited capacity of the government to provide agriculture and livestock extension services, particularly in remote rural areas creates further challenges. As a result, smallholder farmers, especially women, often feel discouraged from taking up agriculture as a primary source of income. Women farmers face even greater challenges, due to a lack of access to knowledge and information, lesser societal acceptance as farmers, and poor market linkages. BRAC aimed to address the problem of low usage of improved seeds, a challenge rooted in both low demand and limited supply, by stimulating demand through demonstrating the benefits of improved seeds and promoting the adoption of improved seed varieties and basic farming practices among women smallholders.</p>	
<p>3. Describe your good practice in more detail. Include the main guiding principles, the desired changes or outcomes you aim to achieve (Theory of Change), and the key phases of implementation.</p> <p>In remote, hard-to-reach areas of Liberia, marginalised and underserved smallholder farmers are often deprived of institutional and government extension support to address challenges related to cultivation and livestock.</p> <p>To address these challenges, BRAC has built a network of community-based promoters: Community Agriculture Promoters (CAPs) and Community Livestock Promoters (CLPs). These promoters play a</p>	

pivotal role in strengthening agricultural extension services by providing technical assistance and ensuring a steady supply of quality inputs at the community level. Alongside providing door to door services, they act as an agent to create a crucial link between markets and underserved farmers. BRAC equips these promoters with training, start-up tools, and connects them to producer groups, ensuring the availability of localised services. Female promoters play a significant role to support women farmers more effectively. They visit smallholder farms, helping women adopt modern, climate-smart techniques, troubleshoot issues, and improve productivity. These efforts not only boost the income of female promoters but also empower them to take active roles in family decision-making and community leadership.

With time, these promoters gain respect and social recognition becoming trusted advisors in their communities. People accept them as leaders. Their contributions are valued by the local government agencies- involving them in bridging gaps in extension services. The promoters also support organising agriculture fairs, mass vaccination, livestock health campaigns and conducting important surveys like animal disease surveillance. The market engagement enhances their negotiation skills, further cementing their role as key players in agricultural development. With these services now available at their doorstep, smallholder farmers have regained confidence to invest in agriculture, fostering hope for a more productive and sustainable future.

- 4. Who are the **key actors and stakeholders** involved in the design and implementation of the good practice, and what are their respective roles? *Consider local partners, government, local authorities, community radios, civil society, research, the private sector, etc.***

The key stakeholders are-

- **BRAC** trains Community Agriculture Promoters (CAPs) and links them to agro-input dealers as well as the district-level Agricultural Production and Extension departments to provide real-time and essential extension services that include the distribution of starter packs, pest and disease control operations, and adoption of high yielding and improved hybrid seed varieties. In addition, selected CAPs receive support to act as agents of agro-dealers, conducting demonstrations and selling quality inputs. CAPs promote the use of efficient post-harvest handling, processing equipment, labor saving technologies and other training in value addition at the farm and community level.
- **Govt.** to ensure that project activities and approaches, such as the usage of CAPs, are integrated into the agricultural extension system at the district level to promote sustainability.
- **and Private Sectors**, - to deliver and distribute agricultural inputs to the CAPs that have been trained and linked to them,
- **Community People** - CAPs work with farmer groups to maximize prices and negotiation power through bulk marketing and linking farmer groups with an off takers, or lead firms, committed to buying their produce at competitive prices

5. How does your intervention ensure **inclusivity and equal and meaningful participation within the **community**?**

Describe how your intervention includes and engages different groups within the community. Consider aspects like gender, age, ethnicity, disability status, livelihoods, and other specific conditions (e.g., people living in prolonged crisis, migrants, refugees). Explain how your intervention engages diverse segments of the rural community. Highlight the specific actions or strategies you use to reach these groups. If applicable, mention if your intervention uses specific approaches such as gender-responsive, gender-transformative, intersectionality, or other methods to ensure inclusivity and gender equality.

The intervention promotes inclusivity and equal participation by engaging diverse groups, including women, youth (60%), and marginalised communities. Both men and women are trained as Community Agriculture Promoters (CAPs) and Community Livestock Promoters (CLPs). These self-employed promoters sell agricultural goods and services, empowering them economically and ensuring they serve their communities effectively.

The initiative focuses on women's empowerment, with female CAPs and CLPs who particularly work with women farmers, promoting modern agricultural practices, and boosting productivity. The intervention is gender-responsive, offering equal opportunities for both male and female farmers and CAP and CLP. By working with the government and private sectors, CAPs and CLPs ensure that the services continue even after the project phase-out. This approach helps farmers from marginal communities access essential services and remain included in agricultural development.

6. By using community engagement, what **results and impacts have your good practice achieved?**

Please provide specific examples and evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of your intervention, focusing on both qualitative and quantitative outcomes related to livelihoods and well-being improvements.

BRAC supports smallholder farmers through capacity-building training and equipping them to become CAPs and CLPs. This has not only increased their income by engaging them in self-sustaining, income-generating jobs but also empowered them to become leaders in their communities. Female CLPs and CAPs, in particular, have become more empowered, contributing to their children's education, improving their family income, and taking an active role in family decision-making. This has significantly enhanced their dignity in both their households and communities.

Getting support from CAP and CLP, female farmers are becoming more confident and active in agricultural development, contributing to positive change and growth in their local economies.

CAPs and CLPs are also contributing to increased access to agricultural extension services, which in turn has led to higher agricultural yields and in improving the Household Food Consumption Score.

7. Among these results, has the good practice led to improvements in terms of **gender equality, women's empowerment, and/or social inclusion?**

Describe the **behavioral changes** in terms of gender that the good practice promotes, emphasizing agency, leadership, and participation in local governance. Include efforts to challenge discriminatory norms and unequal power dynamics. Highlight also how the intervention has supported the well-being (including psychological resilience) of marginalized groups and enhanced their inclusion and participation in decision-making processes.

There have been significant improvements in terms of gender equality, women's empowerment, and social inclusion.

The initiative ensures better access to technical support and extension services, particularly for women farmers within the community. Women have been able to enhance their agricultural productivity, reduce livestock mortality, and consequently improve their income and food security. As women achieve greater financial independence, their roles in household decision-making and their overall social well-being have also been strengthened.

Female CAPs and CLPs, in particular, have become more empowered, both economically and socially, within their communities. By engaging in self-sustaining, income-generating roles, they have gained financial independence, which has enabled them to contribute to their children's education, family income, and key decision-making processes. This has not only enhanced their agency but also strengthened their role as key leaders within their households and communities.

The intervention has encouraged behavioral changes in terms of gender by promoting the leadership of women in agriculture. Female CAPs and CLPs are increasingly recognised as trusted advisors, community leaders, and change-makers. Their active participation in local governance, including organising exhibitions and engaging in government surveys, has shifted the perception of women in the community.

8. What key challenges did you encounter while implementing the community engagement activities, and how did you address them?

Include any resistance from communities, pushback, or issues related to unequal power dynamics, if applicable.

This community-based promoters model has been highly accepted by the communities, hence, there was no pushback or resistance from the community. But the main challenges is that the farmers are subsistence and they don't have sufficient money to buy the inputs or services from the promoters specially in Liberia.

9. What are the key lessons learned from your community engagement good practice?

This community extension service provider model is an effective model for ensuring the extension services to the rural community. As the promoters are from the same or nearby community, the farmers, especially women farmers, can easily access the services at their doorstep even after the project phase out.

10. Has this practice been replicated in the same context or in different contexts?

What are the required conditions to replicate and adapt the practice in another context/geographical area?

This extension service models have been followed in different countries in Asia and Africa. BRAC has developed about 9000 promoters in six countries. To replicate this model, we need the grants support so that the promoters can be developed. The promoters will be developed as an entrepreneur, so the financial support is needed to develop their capacity like training, field attachment etc and after the training they are provided with some start up inputs so that they can continue their learning in the field.

11. How sustainable are the results achieved by this good practice?

Describe the key elements that need to be in place to make the initiative sustainable, including enabling environment (legal and policy frameworks and institutions), local ownership, accountability, etc.

A study was conducted in 2017 to assess the sustainability of this community promoter initiative after the phase out of the project. The study found that farmers continued to use improved seed that was introduced through the programme even one and a half years after BRAC discontinued its direct support to CAPs. Results show that the demand side of seed is positive and the total impact on improved seed usages from all sources remained nearly unchanged though seed purchases from formal and informal BRAC sources declined in phase-out villages. However, the study also found the phase-out of CAP support resulted in farmers switching over from CAPs to the local market or BRAC branch offices as their source of improved seed.

12. Based on the conversations FAO held during the Community Engagement days, a definition of community engagement for empowerment was proposed:

“Community engagement for empowerment and community-led collective action can be defined as an inclusive and participatory process that enables community members to become active agents of change in decisions affecting their lives, health, and environment. This process develops their capacity to achieve sustainable outcomes for improved rural livelihoods. Embracing a rights-based approach, it prioritizes the agency and participation of all community members, regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity, caste, socioeconomic status, political affiliation, migration status, or ability/disability. Indeed, inclusive approaches recognize the complexities of overlapping marginalization and discrimination that can exclude different community members from decision-making processes and implement strategies to foster their participation, agency and empowerment.”

We invite you to contribute to this definition. What would you add or change? Please share your thoughts, suggestions, and any additional elements you believe are crucial for a comprehensive understanding of community engagement approaches aimed at community-led collective action for inclusive rural transformation, people’s empowerment and gender equality.

<p>13. Based on your experience, what gaps or areas for improvement still need to be addressed in the field of community engagement?</p> <p>There are some gaps in ensuring the sustainability of community engagement efforts, particularly after the conclusion of project phases. To address these challenges, it is crucial to develop community engagement plans through a participatory approach, considering the capacity of participants and the specific context of the community. Additionally, creating strong linkages with permanent actors such as government offices or established community-based organisations, is essential. This will ensure that the community can access continued support and resources, fostering long-term impact and resilience beyond the project's lifespan.</p>	
<p>14. What do you think is FAO's role in the field of community engagement? How can FAO support and enhance interventions like yours, if applicable? <i>Consider aspects such as policy advocacy, capacity development, funding, technical assistance, knowledge production and sharing, and fostering partnerships.</i></p> <p>FAO can play a bridging role by sharing and disseminating knowledge with different organizations and scale up this community based extension service provider model in different countries. In the BRAC operated countries, FAO and BRAC can work together to scale up this model.</p>	
<p>Link(s) to specific references about your good practice (e.g. reports, communication products, videos, articles)</p>	<p><i>Please include attachment(s) or add here link(s) to documents/videos/podcasts/other with specific references.</i></p> <p>link: https://www.iza.org/publications/dp/10641/how-sustainable-are-benefits-from-extension-for-smallholder-farmers-evidence-from-a-randomized-phase-out-of-the-brac-program-in-uganda </p>