

Case study

Household Mentoring, Uganda

Gender, targeting and social inclusion



Case studies illustrate the kinds of interventions (from IFAD and other development agencies) that have used household methodologies effectively, highlighting the way each methodology has worked in a particular context.

The **case studies** are “living” documents and will be updated periodically based on new experiences and feedback. If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact the originators.

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October 2014

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Section 1: Overview of the methodology

Name of the methodology	Household mentoring
Country/region of implementation	In Uganda, household mentoring is being implemented in 13 district local governments (Apac, Bugiri, Buliisa, Bundibugyo, Busia, Kamwenge, Kyenjojo, Luwero, Masindi, Mayuge, Naklaseke, Oyam and Yumbe) and 52 sub-counties within those districts.
Start/end date	October 2010 to December 2014
Lead organization sponsoring the development and implementation of the methodology	The household mentoring methodology is part of the wider component of community development in the District Livelihoods Support Programme (DLSP). DLSP is a seven-year government programme (2007-2014) funded by IFAD, the Government of Uganda and the beneficiary communities. The programme, together with the household mentoring methodology, is being implemented by the Ministry of Local Government as the lead programme agency. The rural sociologist in the DLSP programme management unit has overall responsibility for developing and implementing the methodology.
Purpose of the methodology	DLSP promotes household mentoring to foster changes in the mindset of poor households, improve their household gender relations and develop self-esteem, and support them in improving their livelihoods. Household mentoring is a development partnership between the mentor and a selected household. The mentor visits individual households on a regular basis to share knowledge, skills and information in order to foster the personal, social and economic growth of the household members. All adult members of the households engage in the mentoring process.
Contribution of the methodology to wider organizational/project goals	DLSP aims to improve the standard and sustainability of the livelihoods of poor rural households in the programme area. Household mentoring contributes as a tool for social inclusion of poor households to increase their food security and incomes, and to demand – and use – services, especially from local government. It focuses on those poorer households that usually do not participate in development initiatives and are not members of interest groups or other organized groups.
Target group	Household mentoring targets poorer households with limited assets and restricted livelihood options that do not currently participate in community activities and development initiatives.

Section 2: Implementation arrangements

Implementing partners	<p>The practical implementation of DLSP is performed by the district local governments. The community development component of the DLSP, including household mentoring, falls under the responsibility of the district community development staff. The lead person for this component is the district community development officer (DCDO). Each sub-county has one community development officer who reports to the DCDO.</p>
Selection of facilitators/mentors	<p>The household mentors were selected by the sub-county community development officer, with the support of the other local leaders such as local council leaders at the parish and village levels and the parish chiefs.</p> <p>One female and one male household mentor are selected per parish.¹ A sub-county community development officer will typically oversee about 30 mentors and meet with them once every three months. Each mentor begins with ten households, with the aim of adding an additional ten households every 12 months (as the earlier households graduate). However, since none of the households wanted to be weaned off, the mentors ended up with 30 households each over a 36-month period, although the frequency of visits to the “older” households decreased. Some mentors preferred to handle the older households in clusters for ease of follow-up.</p> <p>The mentor should have the following qualities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Volunteer spirit and ability to be a change agent ▪ Literate, with sufficient command of English to enable households to read the manuals (currently available only in English) ▪ Ability to generate simple reports and gather relevant information from many sources to provide to households for their own use ▪ Experience in community development work ▪ Resident of a parish covered by DLSP ▪ Respected in the community ▪ Ability to mobilize and organize others ▪ Ability to work with individual households in a supportive manner ▪ Supportive of gender and youth inclusiveness ▪ Not overloaded with other responsibilities

¹ A parish is a small administrative unit; several parishes make up a sub-county and several sub-counties a district.

Training of facilitators/mentors	<p>The initial training of trainers (TOT) of district and sub-county community development staff was conducted in 2010 by Resource Projects - Kenya, which also developed the original household mentoring manual for DLSP.</p> <p>One-off TOT at the national level was conducted, with trainers responsible for training the household mentors. Although Resource Projects - Kenya participated in the training of the mentors in one district (Luwero, in Central Uganda), the TOT for core trainers was never repeated due to lack of resources.</p> <p>The trained community development staff then trained mentors at the district level. After their ten-day training, district-level community development staff were responsible for training the household mentors in their different locations. Refresher training was organized for the mentors and sub-county community development officers in order to integrate the GALS (gender action learning system) methodology into the mentoring process. This was facilitated by the programme sociologist.</p>
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Section 3: Household mentoring at the household level

Step 1: Selecting the households to be mentored	<p>The selection of the mentee households is the responsibility of the whole community (usually a village). The process is facilitated by the sub-county community development officers, using wealth-ranking tools through a participatory rural appraisal exercise. The community has the opportunity to redefine the selection criteria to match the situation on the ground.</p> <p>Targeting criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Access to land and/or other natural resources that are not being used productively ▪ Few or no household assets ▪ Limited or no income-generating activities ▪ Poor nutrition, poor shelter, malnourished children ▪ People who are socially isolated from community and development activities ▪ Many dependants, including caring for orphans, the chronically ill or the elderly ▪ Households headed by women or children ▪ Children or wives as the main source of family labour ▪ School dropout by the household head (before reaching primary seven) ▪ Willingness and physical and mental capacity to respond to mentoring and other development opportunities
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Step 2: Starting to work with the household	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning at the household level is facilitated by the household mentor. It requires establishing a rapport and trust with household members, and building their confidence. ▪ The mentor facilitates the problem analysis by analysing the causes of household exclusion and the reasons for their lack of assets and limited livelihood activities. ▪ Baseline data are collected (see indicators in section below). ▪ The household undertakes household resource mapping. ▪ The household selects and prioritizes near-nil investments, initially based on the household's resource base and capacity, without needing any external support. ▪ The household, with the guidance of the mentor, develops a household vision that includes a food security plan, asset formation, improved sanitation, better child health and improved gender relations. Originally the vision was written (often by the mentor), but now the visioning and action planning tools from GALS have been adopted. ▪ The household prepares an action plan, based on the household vision, with targets and indicators. The use of locally available resources for start-up activities to promote self-reliance is encouraged.
Step 3: Supporting early implementation of household action plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implementation of food security and improved household sanitation plans, and child health activities is supported. ▪ Asset accumulation process is initiated through selling produce and saving income. ▪ Once households have realized some basic achievements, their confidence increases. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The mentoring process always emphasizes food security, sanitation and hygiene as the first steps towards achieving good health and, therefore, energy and morale for moving into bigger activities in the action plan. ○ The mentor encourages household members to begin interacting with their neighbours and other mentored households. This initial interaction exposes households to information about marketing produce and where to obtain other basic services, which develops confidence. ○ Achieving food security also usually means having some surplus for sale for the purchase of other non-farm items such as paraffin, soap and salt. This way, outside interaction becomes automatic. ▪ The pathway is: food security and good sanitation; preliminary interaction with the outside world in marketing produce; forming or joining common interest groups; joining voluntary savings and loans associations (VSLAs); participating in community leadership; and accessing information about other activities and government programmes. ▪ Households are encouraged to develop self-reliance by monitoring the implementation of their action plans, using the following indicators, among others: improved food security; increased asset ownership; improved household sanitation; household participation in groups and other development initiatives; improved child health; construction of improved dwellings with emphasis on the materials used for the walls, roof and floors; and improved household gender relations. Change in gender relations is measured by joint household decision-making, shared labour (especially garden work and fetching water by men, which are usually the responsibility of women and children), and fewer household conflicts.

Step 4: Building functional partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When households have improved their income generation, they are assisted in identifying and joining viable common interest groups, such as VSLAs, and producer and marketing groups. Linking households to other services depends on the vulnerabilities that have been identified. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Significant vulnerabilities, such as health needs and school attendance, are handled as soon as households have identified the problem. ○ Linkage to support services such as functional adult literacy (FAL) depends on the literacy level of the household member, and at times her/his level of interest. (If the level is low, the mentoring sessions will need to focus on the importance of literacy.) ▪ Households that are not able to join common interest groups are clustered into small groups of up to seven so as to initiate the process of group formation. They perform tasks together, such as land preparation, in order to achieve their vision faster. ▪ Linkages are created to other government services such as the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS). ▪ Some of the household clusters are guided to become VSLAs. ▪ Monitoring and reporting of household progress continues.
Step 5: Supporting households' active participation in development initiatives (pre-exit)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In preparation for concluding the mentoring process, households and their groups are supported to better invest, manage credit and actively participate in produce marketing processes. Many households will have joined DLSP-supported farmer groups, which is a loose form of graduation into other DLSP activities. However, they are expected to join or be linked to VSLAs, marketing associations, and savings and credit cooperative organizations after the mentor has introduced them to the concepts of credit and marketing with support of the district commercial officer. ▪ Monitoring and reporting on progress of households and their groups continues.
Step 6: Ending the household mentoring process (exit)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At the end of the process, the households and their groups are linked to other partners. This process worked well in terms of the DCDO having the clusters and their groups identified and short-listed to participate in, and benefit from, other programmes such as NAADS, community demand-driven development, and the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund. (In Masindi district, a local NGO took over the facilitation of a household cluster after it was linked to the NGO by the community development officer and household mentor.) ▪ A final household mentoring progress report based on the household mentoring methodology log frame is prepared and shared with stakeholders. The methodology is part of the household mentoring handbook, from which the mentoring indicators are derived.
Average length of the implementation cycle	<p>The mentoring of a household can take between 12 and 24 months, depending on the capacity and interest of the individual household. In the beginning (the first four months), a mentor should visit a household once every week, which decreases to every two weeks for about four to six months, depending on the progress made by the household. Eventually visits take place once a month until the end of the mentoring cycle.</p>

Section 4: Monitoring and indicators

Monitoring process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual households monitor their own action plans, with the support of the household mentor. Monitoring of household mentoring is carried out by local government staff, particularly the district and sub-county community development officers.
Indicators	<p>There are general indicators, listed below, covering seven basic output areas. In addition, each household is expected to have its own unique indicators arising from its situational analysis and action plan. The indicators require baseline data at the beginning of the mentoring process to serve as a reference point for progress.</p> <p>Output 1: Improved food security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of meals per day Number of hungry months in a year (defined as the number of months in which the household experiences the most food insecurity, i.e. is unable to access enough food to have at least three meals per day) Dietary intake diversity (measured by the intake of foods containing different nutrients such as proteins, carbohydrates and vitamins) <p>Output 2: Increased asset ownership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Types and number of assets owned at the beginning as per the baseline and acquired during the mentoring period <p>Output 3: Improved household sanitation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of bath shelters constructed Number of latrines constructed Number of drying racks constructed Number of rainwater tanks constructed <p>Output 4: Households participate in groups and other development initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of household members (by sex, age) joining FAL classes Number of household members (by sex, age) joining producer and marketing groups Number of household members (by sex, age) joining savings and credit groups <p>Output 5: Improved child health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of children within the normal growth curve (progressive growth), measured using a standard WHO growth curve, derived from the child immunization card Number of malnourished children in households, measured using standard parameters such as wasting, oedema, stunting and scaly skin (these are visible signs of malnutrition in children that mentors can use to determine the number of malnourished children in the household) <p>Output 6: Construction of improved dwellings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Types of walls/roofs/floors <p>Output 7: Improved household gender relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less domestic conflict in the household Evidence of joint planning and decision-making as a household (this is evident when a household member – especially the wife – talks competently about the household plans and activities) Equitable access to resources, such as land for cultivation, and access to benefits, such as the proceeds from the sale of produce

Section 5: Results

Number of beneficiaries reached/ planned to be reached	<p>DLSP has a pool of 602 trained mentors – 50 per cent female – who have each mentored around 30 households. As of October 2013, 18,172 households were reached:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 9,795 (54 per cent) male-headed households. ▪ 8,377 (46 per cent) female-headed households. <p>The original target by close of project was 17,280 households.</p>
Main changes that can be attributed to the methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved sanitation and hygiene. ▪ Improved food security and household incomes. (In a sample of 533 households in Nakaseke district, 81 per cent reported having better incomes and 94 per cent reported having more than two meals a day.) ▪ Social empowerment and social inclusion of vulnerable groups, especially women, in development activities. ▪ Households developed a spirit of self-reliance and the ability to handle household issues together as a unit. ▪ Capacity to discuss sensitive household problems together, such as HIV/AIDS-related issues, gender inequalities in asset ownership and access to benefits of household enterprises. ▪ Improved gender relations – joint decision-making, especially on household resource use; sharing of responsibilities (not yet very significant) and productive work; and less domestic conflict as a result of joint planning. It was found that one of the key causes of domestic conflict was the fact that household members hid their plans and productive activities (e.g. proceeds from marketing produce) from each other. This has changed as a result of the mentoring: all produce and marketing issues are now handled transparently and jointly by the household. ▪ Conscious effort by household members to come out of poverty and address their vulnerabilities by using their own locally available resources, possibly with little outside help. ▪ Improved self-esteem and self-worth.
Key success factors and strengths of the methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mentoring of all adult members of the households together, and involving the youth/children. This contributes to the creation of a generational household memory that extends beyond the life of the household head. ▪ Use of locally known volunteers. The relationship created between the household and mentor is likely to continue informally, even after the DLSP has closed. ▪ Use of the community to identify households in need of mentoring. This strengthens targeting and ensures that the community represents a safe environment to support the mentored households. ▪ A visioning process backed by: (i) focused analysis of relationships, resources, power, challenges and opportunities; (ii) systematic planning; and (iii) systematic assessment of progress made. ▪ Mentored households become role models in their communities as they showcase their progress. ▪ Participation of households in preparing their own vision. This ensures that the vision remains the focus of the household for many years and is a powerful tool for

	<p>sustainability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mentored households encouraged to form clusters. The clusters can later evolve into farmer groups that can engage in commercial agricultural activities. ▪ Good use of ongoing FAL classes. These classes enable poor households to develop basic literacy and numeracy skills.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Volunteer fatigue: mentors receive a bicycle and a small monthly facilitation allowance of US\$10, but have many competing claims on their time. ▪ Reluctance of households to graduate from mentoring: they wish to continue the ongoing relationship with their mentor, which contributes to overloading the mentors. ▪ Household capacity: some households are not able to read and write, which makes written action plans and visions useless since the households may never refer to these documents. ▪ Mentor capacity: it is difficult to recruit mentors who have completed secondary education, which means they have less capacity to understand and interpret the guidelines, carry out the household situational analysis, document the processes (action plans and achievements) and capture impact data. ▪ Poor targeting: instances of “poor identification” of beneficiaries take place as a result of community development staff lacking skills in participatory rural appraisal. ▪ Lack of motivation: some households are motivated to participate in mentoring in order to access the DLSP food security grant of US\$120. This can jeopardize the “near-nil investment” approach of the methodology, which should be based only on a household’s existing resources.
The way forward: potential improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The use of volunteers as mentors remains the best option as long as they are motivated by a better facilitation allowance. Government extension staff could be an option but they are thin on the ground. ▪ Refresher training (three days) should be provided for the household mentors, the community development officers and production officers (agriculture and livestock) to equip facilitators with extra skills, such as GALS tools for helping mentored households create realistic household visions, and other tools to enable households to track the visions and monitor progress. The refresher training can be done at the sub-county level in order to have a manageable number of participants. ▪ User-friendly guidelines should be designed that match the capacity of household mentors and households. ▪ An appropriate methodology (such as GALS) should be used in developing household visions and actions plans.
Sustainability	<p>The DLSP is expected to close in December 2014, when support from the programme to local governments and the mentoring activities will end.</p> <p>However, household mentoring activities have been mainstreamed into the local government system, using the community development department to oversee their implementation through refresher training of the mentors.</p>

Section 6: Resources

Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The preliminary cost involved in designing the methodology and training the TOTs and household mentors was approximately US\$120,000 (UGX 300 million). ▪ Mentoring each household costs about US\$12 (UGX 30,000) and about US\$218,064 (UGX 545 million) to mentor the 18,172 households. This covers the cost of the mentors' monthly facilitation. The programme also spent an additional US\$30,000 (UGX 80 million) on bicycles for the household mentors. ▪ Approximately US\$80,000 (UGX 200 million) was spent by the local governments in supervision and monitoring. These costs also cover other areas under the community development component.
Resources	<p>DLSP/Ministry of Local Government (2010) Mentoring households to exit from poverty. A training of trainers manual</p> <p>DLSP/Ministry of Local Government (2010) Mentoring households to exit from poverty. A handbook for community-based household mentors</p> <p>http://www.molg.go.ug/publications/307-household-mentoring-handbook</p>




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