Introduction

The African Cassava Agronomy Initiative (ACAII) seeks to improve benefits of cassava farmers through generation of knowledge and development of Decision Support Tools (DSTs), packaged in formats suitable for extension agents and farmers to apply site specific recommendations in Tanzania and Nigeria. To support project implementation, a well-structured, gender-inclusive results-based monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) system was developed to measure project results, ensure integration of feedback, and provides continuous tracking between outputs and impacts.

Materials and Methods

The MEL system has two components: i) routine data collection and ii) baseline and impact evaluation (Fig 1).

![Fig 1. Components of the MEL system](image)

Data collection focuses on i) baseline, ii) awareness creation, iii) insights gained by farmers, iv) uptake-use of the DSTs, v) adoption - changes in practices and behaviour and vi) ultimate benefits/impacts, (Fig 2). A baseline study was conducted, based on which subsequent panel and impact data (ii – vi) will be related. Through the ICT platform, partners have assembled details of farmers reached through their dissemination activities and a pilot study on insight gained (with a sample of 100 farmers – 40% female) was conducted.

We want to track farmers who…

- participated in the baseline
- were reached
- gained insights
- changed the way they do things
- changed pest practices
- benefited

... and understand why (not)!

![Fig 2: Levels of data collection and feedback](image)

MEL data were collected using Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) (Fig 3). Over 50 staff of project partners in Nigeria and Tanzania were trained in the MEL system.

Results and Discussion

The baseline study involved 3227 cassava farmers (38% female) across Nigeria and Tanzania. The preliminary analysis of farmers’ practices are shown in fig 4.

![Fig 4: Farmers practices in Nigeria and Tanzania.](image)

Project partners have reached 6954 (30% female) farmers in Nigeria and Tanzania with the DSTs recommendations (fig 5).

![Fig 5: Farmers reached with the DSTs recommendations in Nigeria and Tanzania.](image)

Excerpt from results of the pilot study on insight gained indicates increased awareness and mastering over new aspects of planting and benefits of inputs use by farmers. Figure 5 shows percentage of farmers who responded to selected questions.

![Fig 6: Percentage of farmers who responded correctly to selected questions.](image)

A further detailed study on insight gained, uptake, and adoption with 2400 farmers in Nigeria is on-going.

Conclusion

- The timely tracking of awareness creation to the insight gained has provided feedback on the knowledge gained by farmers, and effectiveness of the various approaches. The results indicate that farmers are aware of the practices and benefits of fertilizers, However, farmers understanding of the profitability of fertilizer use needs to be strengthened.
- The use of the ICT platform for data collection has provided timely access to data collected, and provided real time feedback to make instant/ongoing the go corrections in project management.

Acknowledgements

This research is supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.