



RESEARCH ARTICLE

HOUSEHOLD ASSESSMENT IN POST CONFLICT SITUATIONS: STRATEGIES, CHALLENGES AND RESULTS: A CASE STUDY OF NORTH EAST ZONE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Insurgency activities have led to socio-economic and infrastructural challenges and almost total collapse in the Northeast, Nigeria. Prior to Boko Haram insurgency, most people in the Northeast were involved in agricultural and socio-economic activities. However, the negative effect of insurgency led to displacement of over three million inhabitants, reducing them to refugees with adverse effects on their livelihoods. But with relative peace being restored in most affected communities, displaced people are leaving IDPs camps for their communities. The non-governmental organizations through funding from donor agencies came up with different interventions to bring reliefs to the affected host communities and returnees; however, this cannot be done without appropriate identification of the target audience for the intervention. Therefore, the study aims to explore appropriate methodology in post conflict situation to identify most vulnerable farmers per house hold in the host communities with minimal bias. Purposive cluster sampling was adopted in selecting most affected states with a sample size of 11,000; while Registered Cooperative Associations and Household Targeted Committee (HTC) strategies were explored to determine a better strategy that will produce minimal bias in registration of the households. Through systematic review of 360 Cooperative Farmers' Associations registers, it was observed that over 65% of the members are not vulnerable and 48% of them not residing in the communities, 15% household members duplicated, while 20% are vulnerable. The Household Targeted Committee (HTC) strategy that enhanced community participation, ownership and sustainability of project produced results close to 100% vulnerable farmers (11,896) with minimal bias. Therefore, in post conflict situation household assessment, mixture of research methods and HTC strategy is thus recommended.

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INTRODUCTION

Many years of insurgency in Northeast Nigeria compounded communities challenge of widespread displacement of over three million people within the region, food insecurity, negative impact on agricultural and income generating activities, low market demand, reduction in purchasing power at the household level, low savings, killing and maiming lead to idleness among the people.

This continuous insurgency (conflict) has led to hunger strike among the adults and severe malnutrition among children in the affected communities. Community is commonly defined as a specific geographic area which is with its political jurisdiction. According to Poplin, 1972, community also has two additional elements such as psychological ties and social interaction. Lindell and Perry, 2004 posit that psychological ties involve a sense of shared identity that arises from common goals, values and behavioural norms (shared expectations of appropriate behavior) that lead "insiders" to distinguish themselves from "outsiders". Another school of thoughts defined communities as ecological networks in which the basic types of unit are households, business and government

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agencies (Bates and Peland, 1994; Peacock and Ragsdale, 1997). This means that each social unit has people- family members in the case of households, employees in the case of businesses and provision of resources attributable to government. Insurgency or armed conflict is a situation where normal livelihood of the people and communities is being disorganized, loss of properties, and other socio-economic menace. Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria has been a situation of violence which has led to fears, loss of properties, displacement of community members, killing and maiming, disruption of socio-economic activities which eventually lead to famine and low productivity among the active labour force .country. Insurgency is a new phenomenon in Nigeria, and the government had no premonition of gross negative effects, hence, it was not nib on bud and later became a big problem for the country.

The bitter experience in the northeast zone of Nigeria where insurgency happened and lots of communities displaced, Husbands killed leaving many women to become widows overnight and children without fathers or parent in some situations and socio-economic activities disrupted. The impact of insurgency resulted into unifying developed countries and allied to join forces together to come and rescue the country especially the northeast in the fight against Boko Haram before they were finally dislodged even though there are still pocket of their activities still on-going. Due to the devastating nature in which many people become homeless, disabled, agricultural activities stand-still and hunger covered every households; the international development agencies through non-governmental organizations started emergency interventions to reduce the effects of the insurgency in the affected states, LGAs, communities and individuals.

The non-governmental organization through funding from donors came up with different interventions that will lead to reconstructing or rebuilding the affected local communities which are regarded as host communities, individuals, and the returnees from internally displaced camps. However, this cannot be done without appropriate identification of the target audience for the intervention. The Household Listing study is expected to come up with identification of the most vulnerable farmers at the household's level in various villages to be registered for the intervention. Part of the intervention among the host communities and the returnees will include the conduct of training on agricultural activities, provision of improved seedlings that will increase the agricultural produce of the farmers, technical supports so that the affected people will gradually move from a state of poverty to self-reliance and less dependent on humanitarian services.

Post-conflict assessment is a new phenomenon in Nigeria and there are very limited literatures on the subject, hence, the study apart from the registration of vulnerable households, also aims to explore appropriate mixed methodologies in post conflict situation that enhance the identification and registration of most vulnerable farmers per household in the host communities with minimal bias. *Definition:* Chambers and Conway (1991) define livelihoods as constituting capabilities of people, tangible assets, intangible assets and activities undertaken to make a living. The vulnerable household is defined as the household that suffered shock as result of reduction in resources and living in a fragile environment.

Vulnerability include death toll, displacement, loss in sense of belonging, loss of access to market and services. These losses occur because availability of resources is reduced and when they are available, individuals and households may not be able to convert them into well-being. According to Alderman, Hoddinott and Kinsey 2008; Justino 2012; Verwimp, Justino and Bruck 2009; Chamarbagwala and Moran 2008 all claimed that understanding of the consequences of violent conflict on the lives, livelihoods and human capital of individuals and household is very essential and a way forward to provide adequate reliefs to the affected communities.

Literature Review

Relief, rehabilitation and development are considered in the post conflict situation as discrete activities but in actual sense, there is overlapping or simultaneous (Date-Bah, 1996). This view was also echoed by Maxwell and Buchanan-Smith, 1994; Whiteside, 1996 that the three concepts need not to be separated but emphasis should be on linking relief and development together. Impact of war in Mozambique led to human, social and economic effect, in terms of death, disability, displacement, and trauma suffered by the population. Literature search revealed in case of Mozambique, that review of selected academic, journalistic and agency literature were combined with quantitative technique (questionnaire and face-to-face interviews) and qualitative techniques (Focus Group Discussions) were held. In-depth interviews were also conducted among market women and street traders. It was gathered that interviews were informal and semi-structured to allow women themselves to raise issues of concern. According to Wilson's work in Zambezia province in 1991-2, Chingo's 1992 field research in Manica province and Whiteside's work in Zambezia in 1994 all claimed that information generated were limited, however, provided insights which are supplemented with findings from other published and un-published post-conflict field research even though, not all of them focus on gender but have some relevant issues. From literature review, it is glaring that appropriate research methodologies for post-conflict situation are very scanty, hence, mixture of conventional research methods was applied in the survey. A finding of the 1993-4 PPU study showed that only 17% of the female-headed households in the displaced urban population decided to return to their home.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in six local government areas from three states in the Northeast, Nigeria. The selected states and local government areas from include: Gombi and Hong LGAs (Adamawa State), Biu, and Hawul LGAs in Borno State and Jakusko and Bursari LGAs in Yobe State respectively. A mixture of research sampling technique was used in selecting States, LGAs and communities. This is the only way to ensure representativeness of the affected areas and targeted audience. It also helps to get unbiased estimation and to determine the sampling errors. *A probability sample is defined as one in which the units are selected randomly with known and non-zero probabilities.* However, the knowledge of the insurgency impact was the determinant of the selection of coverage areas into the study. Purposive cluster sampling was adopted in selecting most affected states, Local Government Areas and host communities into the study; while Registered Cooperative Associations and Household Targeted Committee (HTC) strategies were explored to determine a better strategy that will

produce minimal bias in the registration of the vulnerable households. Three states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states were purposely selected among the six states that had experienced greater impact of insurgency in the Northeast zone. Second stage of sampling was the selection of local government areas (LGAs)- Gombi(1,500) and Hong (1,500) in Adamawa; Biu (2,000) and Hawul (2000) in Borno and Bursari(2,000) and Jakusko (2,000) in Yobe state respectively.

Two strategies were explored to ascertain the better strategy for identification of most vulnerable farmers through households in the communities. The strategies include: Registered Farmers' Cooperative Associations and Household Targeted Committee (HTC). Each of these techniques were pilot tested and the better option that produces the list of vulnerable farmers per households with minimal bias and comparative advantages that produce high quality data devoid of duplication and manipulation by the system was adopted. The two strategies explored are briefly explained below.

Strategy One: The Use of Farmers' Cooperative Association

Farmers' cooperative association is defined as a group of farmers that have similar characteristics coming together to form a group for the better comparative advantage over other individual who does not belong to the group within defined geographical territory. The farmers' cooperative association membership cut across individuals that are farmers in the community- husband, wife, adult children provided they are financially viable to pay their dues and promote what the association stand for. It is a free-will association of farmers who want to derive benefits of being a member and not necessarily association formed due to vulnerability. It is association of which majority of members are well to do and influential in their own way within the community of operation. The association attracts a lot of benefits to the members such as contributing money to buy fertilizers in bulk and distribute to its member; provide loans to members, solicit for financial helps from agricultural institutions and access to banks loans with less collaterals and interest to pay at the specified period.

Considering the enormous benefits derived from cooperatives, the researcher asked a question on whether registered farmers' cooperative or association is the better option in identifying most vulnerable farmers per household in post conflict situations within the community? The answer was derived from systematic review of 360 registered farmers' cooperatives associations. The farmers' association is a group of people with similar characteristics whose majority of their members are well to do and NOT the most vulnerable in the community, have membership up to 150 in some cooperatives, while some have membership less than 100, membership is not restricted to a person per household, hence, there is possibility of duplication of household members in the cooperatives registers, some of the members live in urban areas but come home during farming season while some members are civil servants or in paid employment in private organizations. Using cooperatives associations as sampling frame to select vulnerable farmers through households in the communities for reconstruction and recovery interventions will be a misnomer and misleading.

Household is being defined as a group of people living together under one roof, having everything in common, eating from the same pot and recognize one person as the head of the household. The head of household could be male or female or both depending on the operational definition of household head. In a situation where the target audience is centered on vulnerability and head of the family, farmers' cooperative register will not be ideal master sampling frame because there is likelihood of duplication of household members and any attempt to filter some people out will meet brick wall as witnessed during the registration of the households. This happened due to wrong perception among cooperative members that government or international NGOs will be distributing food items, money and agricultural seedlings as usual, hence, any attempt to reduce the quota of any household member will be vehemently opposed.

Even with adequate briefing of the executives of the associations, the researcher was advised to register all their members first before proceeding to register the individuals that do not belong to any association. The executive members struggled to ensure that each of its member are enrolled because of the perceived benefits they will derive when the intervention kick-off. Assuming the researcher did not adhere to the study ethics, most of the vulnerable household members in community would have been disenfranchised in the proposed intervention. It was observed also during the study, there were instances where house wives claimed that their husbands have died because they wanted to be registered. To prevent unbiased registration of most vulnerable farmers per household in the host communities, using farmers' cooperative was considered not to be a better option, hence, the strategy was dropped. Nevertheless, Farmers' cooperative associations have their own merits such as when an organization want to work with registered cooperatives to implement intervention that does not deals with vulnerability, when joint effort is required for collaterals, or seeking for loan from financial institutions. Providing co-laterals is made easier by cooperatives than individual. Pay-back loans and tracking is best done through farmers' cooperatives.

Strategy Two: Household Targeted Committee (Empowering Community)

Household targeted committee" (HTC) strategy was the second strategy explored in which community leaders and opinion leaders are empowered to actively participate in the post conflict households listing study. The HTC strategy enhances the active local participation that encourages ownership and sustainability of any intervention at community-driven interventions. The researcher in conjuncture with the District Head and its Lawans/Hakims set-up the Household Targeted Committee. The HTC was headed by the District Head and all Lawan (village heads) and influential opinion leaders in the communities are members. The responsibilities of the HTC include: identification of most vulnerable households, produce the list of the most vulnerable farmers per household in the selected villages and handling over the identified lists to the lead researcher to start the process of farmers per household registration and provide oversight for the registration of vulnerable farmers in their domain. The household listing included all members aged (0-70) of the households starting from the head of household up to the youngest child in the family. However, only the household head that was identified as farmer and claimed to

own farmland or have access to farmland was qualified for the registration. The study observed that the comparative advantage of using HTC was higher than farmers' cooperatives. The HTC only considered the vulnerable farmers who are head of household and not the influential farmers who are self-reliance. The strategy also recognized the importance of community leaders in mobilizing its subjects, have local knowledge and capabilities for identifying most vulnerable farmers per households, ensure rapid and progressive learning, encourages handing over the stick to the leaders with view to reduce biases in selection of the target audience for the intervention. HTC also promotes community participation starting from the early stages of project planning that will encourage ownership and sustainability of community-driven intervention.

Questionnaire

Two questionnaires were used in the Household Assessment: The Household Listing Module and Head of Household Module. The household listing module was used to list the member of household bio-data information such as names, relationship to the head of the household, gender, age, sex, marital status, education, and land ownership. During the listing of members of the household, all married children in the household were excluded because they belong to another new household. The head of household questionnaire content was based on the basic questions such as land ownership, land owners/access, gender household head type, size of the farm land, farmers per household, secondary sources of income, market and savings culture. The questionnaires were written in English and then translated key words into Hausa the local language of the people.

During the training, role plays and field trials were conducted to ascertain the knowledge level of the field team and effect necessary corrections before the field operation. A decentralized training was adopted to enhance local participants and thereby enhanced the effective logistic and high quality data from the field.

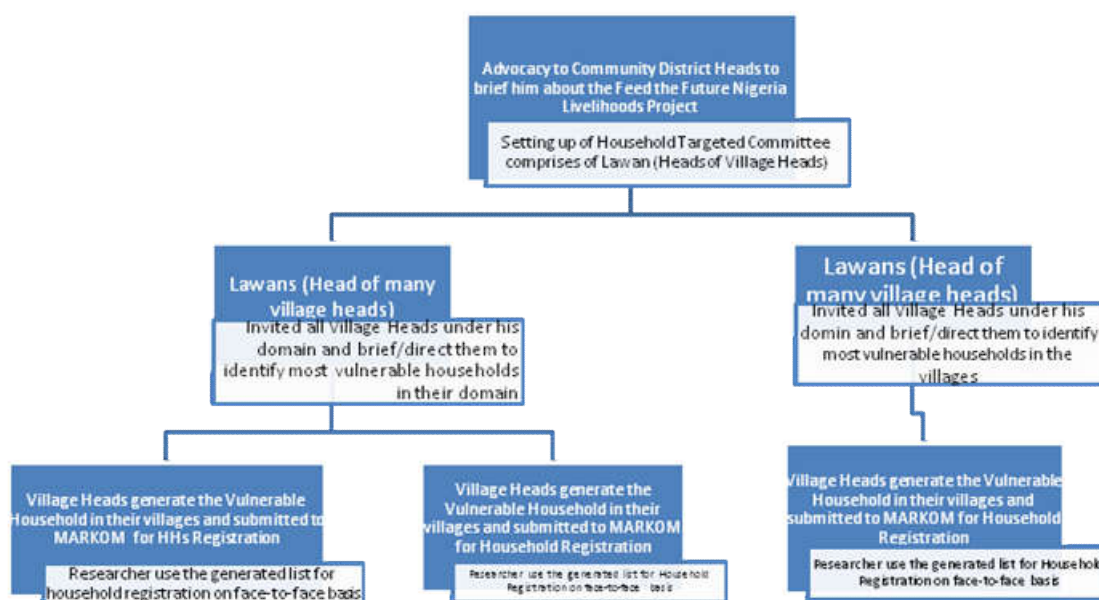
Household Assessment Strategic Map for the Registration of Vulnerable Farmers Per Household

The research team paid advocacy visit to the District Head in different communities to brief them on the purpose of the exercise. Secondly, he invited all key officers in his council and equally briefed them and set-up "Household Targeted Committee" (HTC). The HTC comprises of the District Head as the chairman and Lawans/ Hakimis (Head of many villages) as members. The HTC came up with sharing formula of the assigned sample size to their domain according to the population of each area and vulnerability. The HTC members went back to their domain and convened a meeting of all villages heads and jointly share their own assigned numbers.

Step-by-Step Procedure of the Household Targeted Committee (HTC)

Advocacy to Community District Heads (Hakimi / Sariki)

Researcher paid advocacy visits to community district heads of different communities to brief them on aims of study in the Northeast Zone, Nigeria. Researcher solicited for the support and the setting up of household targeted committee (HTC) to oversee the identification and listing of most vulnerable poor farmers in the households per village within the domain.



Source: Markom Evaluation HTC Strategic Map, 2017

Figure 1. HTC Strategic Map for Household Listing in Northeast

Recruitment and Training of Field Team

The research assistants identified, recruited and trained are graduates with some of them having master degree in various field of studies. The recruitment was done per coverage area in the selected states of the survey.

The pre-determined sample size was used to assign specific households to be identified and listed per community per LGA. The assigned sample sizes were shared by the Household targeted committee headed by the district heads according to the population of each area.

Lawan (Coordinator of Village Heads)

The coordinator (Lawan or Hakimi) invited the village heads under their jurisdiction and briefed them on the proposed intervention and study. He presented the pre-determined number of households assigned to the village heads and they jointly shared the allocation into the villages.

Village Heads

The village heads and other key village officers brainstormed on which households to be included as most vulnerable in their village using the most affected household, loss of properties, loss of parents or husband and other socio-economic criteria. The generated lists were taken back to the Lawan (Coordinator) who finally handed the lists to the research team led by principal investigator for the household listing, and registration.

Household Listing

- The Lead of Research Team received the identified most vulnerable household lists from the Lawans/Hakims (Coordinators) according to the villages within their domain.
- Roll call of the vulnerable households per village was taken and assigned to the research assistants (enumerators) that will administer the questionnaire with them. The enumerators were taught how to identify double registration of husband and wife in different occasion to avoid duplication of a household members. The information of general household members was recorded in Household Listing Form 01.
- Form 02 was used to obtain information from the head of household either male or female headed households
- The key variable for eligibility of a vulnerable household head is when he or she has access to farmland. Access is defined to mean ownership of land, rent, inherited land that can be used for farming or farmland given out as gift.
- The fieldwork was conducted between February 25 - March 23, 2017.

At the end of the training, the field team (enumerators/research assistants and supervisors) were deployed to their various assigned duty. Group technique interview was adopted since it makes monitoring and supervision easy. The fieldwork per state lasted for 10 days. The quality controllers were responsible for ensuring data quality. Data quality was carried out through accompaniment, spot-checked and back-checked of the completed questionnaires. Supervisors were saddled with the responsibility of ensuring high quality data from the fieldwork as first layer of data quality control checks on the field, while the researcher and co-researcher served as the second layer of quality controllers.

Challenges

The security issues in the Northeast and particularly in some of the selected LGAs made movement from one location to another uneasy and a major challenge. Another challenge faced was from the Farmers' cooperatives that wanted all their members to be registered; inadequate sampling frame, Duplication of household members were also observed in registered Farmers Cooperatives registers. Using cooperatives

strategy would have disenfranchised many of vulnerable targeted households who do not belong to any of the cooperatives. The study found out also that many of the cooperatives either multi-purpose or farmers' cooperatives/associations are not residing in the communities but live in the urban areas which could impinge on the implementation of the intervention. Elimination of duplication of household members would have been uphill task since husband, wives and children are members of the cooperatives with the wrong perception that donors are bringing food items and/or financial gain to them to share, hence, want lion share of the proposed intervention for their members.

Analysis

The completed questionnaires were edited and coded in central location. Data were entered using Excel Spreadsheet and analysis run in SPSS version 20.0. The lead researcher carried out the cleaning of the data set. The individual response rates for the household listing and verification was overwhelming and 100 percent. A total of 11, 892 households were registered after elimination of very old people (80 years and above) as well as the double registration of households using household targeted committee strategy.

Household Demographic

The study collected demographic data of all the members of the sampled households using HTC strategy. A total of 11,892 individuals living in the sampled households were registered.

Age and Gender

It is very important to have idea about the age and sex distribution in the registered households during the study. The data revealed that ages 0 to 5 years recorded 8.2%, aged 6 to 14 years had 17.2%, aged 15-24 (17.4%), 25-39 years (26.4%), 40-59 years (24.1%), 60-79% had 6.5% and 80 years and above recorded 0.3%. Gender analysis revealed that three-fifth (60.4%) were male and 40% in the sampled population was female.

Education

Half of the respondents surveyed had some formal education while the remaining half population had Qur'anic or non-formal. Those without formal education were 16.5%, Qur'anic education had 33.9%, those with primary education were 18.1%, secondary (22.2%) and tertiary education recorded 9.2% respectively.

Marital Status

Almost two-fifth (35.4%) of the sampled respondents in the registration of the households in the Northeast was single, married respondents (53.2%), separated/divorced (1.5%) and widows recorded 9.9%.

Household Size

The fertility live births history per household was not recorded because married children per household belong to new households. The "*operational definition of household*", exclude all married children either males or females, hence, proxy average household size was computed for the study; therefore, comparing the data with other sources should be with a caution.

The proxy average household size in the three surveyed states was 5.0. The breakdown of household sizes by LGA revealed the following: Biu recorded 5.2, Hawul had 4.8, Gombi (5.2), Hong (5.6), Bursari (4.6) and Jakusko (5.0) respectively. Bursari LGA witnessed low household size and this could be due to early marriages of their children, which could be because of religious or cultural norms. However, with close examination of the data, the study can conclude that result was close to the trend of average household size data recorded by Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey, 2013 per region in Nigeria. According to Nigeria Demography and Health Survey, 2013, fertility rate per woman was 5.5; North West zone recorded average household size of 6.7 and Northeast household size was 6.3. The post conflict household listing study situation put the overall average household in Northeast as 5.0 where most of the families have suffered loss of their beloved ones due to insurgency, and the study. Therefore, average household size recorded was not completely the true reflection of fertility per household since life birth history per household was not the area of concentration but just to give a clue on the trend when compared with NDHS average family size.

Ownership of Land and Size of Land

The ownership of land is defined as access to farmland either by ownership, rent, and inheritance or bought for using it for agricultural activities. If every individual in the household has access to farmland, it is regarded as owner of land and is thus regarded as a farmer in the household. All the studied head of household claimed ownership of farmland. The size of the land was assessed using less than or equal to 0.5 hectares and greater or equal to 0.5 hectares. Proportion of the farmers who claimed that the size of the land is less than or equal to 0.5 hectares had 29.1% and greater or equal to 0.5 hectares recorded 70.9%.

Gender Headed Household and Farmer Per Household

Gender headed household revealed that male headed household recorded 21.2%, female headed household (13%) and both male and female headed family (65.8%). The average farmers per household were two across the study locations. The finding conformed with the Mozambique study findings that showed only 17% of the female-headed households in the displaced urban population decided to return to their home.

Knowledge of Market

Farmers were asked whether they know any market where they can sell their agricultural produce; a high proportion of them (93.9%) claimed they are aware of the local market in their community where they can sell their produce and 6.1% said they were not aware of any market where they can sell their produce. The survey also assessed other sources of income apart from agricultural activities among the farmers. Proportion of farmers that claimed they have other sources of income recorded 49.1% and 50.9% said they only depend on agricultural activities.

Saving Culture

Relative low saving habit was observed during the registration of the vulnerable households. About two-fifth (42.8%) of the farmers have cultivated the habit of saving from incomes generated from the sales of the agricultural produce while 57.2% said they do not have savings.

The reason given was based on lack of good yield from the agricultural produce; others said they always store their farms produce until there is need to take some and sell and use the money to solve immediate needs of the family.

Mode of Saving

Among the farmers who have saving culture, 38% of them keep their money with bank, 21.2% saves their money through contribution, 39.4% through adoption of saving box and 1.4% entrust their money in someone's care. In terms of money the farmer saves, it was observed that the monthly amount usually saves varies from N400 to N50,000.

Conclusion and Summary

Post-conflict household assessment through household identification, listing and registration activities before the start of intervention is a right step in the right direction and enhances proper planning, implementation of intervention, solid foundation for monitoring, and evaluation of impact of the project. HTC strategy is considered as a better option to use together with other research methods in the identification and registration of most vulnerable farmers per households in post-conflict environment.

This enhances less rancor on the part of the community members since the generated list emanated from their traditional/religious and opinion leaders. Although, it cannot be totally true to say that the generated list involves all the most vulnerable farmers in the communities, however, the human error or biases were curtailed to certain extent. Nevertheless, validation of all the registered farmers per household using physical identification of ownership of the land is of paramount important. This is necessary because majority of the community members are predominantly farmers and have land but not all the people live within the communities which can affect the implementation of the intervention. The intervention also observed unmet need in terms of fertilizer acquisition. Lack of availability of fertilizer and the little available fertilizers are not affordable was documented as the major challenges being faced by the farmers.

Recommendation

The researchers wish to recommend that for any intervention in post conflict situation, Household Targeted Committee strategy together with other research techniques should be explored to identify the eligible target audience, register the households and conduct a follow-up for such project. Its benefits include community active participation at initial planning stage of intervention, ease of identification of eligible audience, and other necessary supportive.

Cooperative association should be considered when the intervention is not dealing with most vulnerable farmers in the communities because it has also its merits. Community-driven post conflict or insurgency situation intervention should integrate the community leaders and opinion leaders so that they can actively participate at the initial planning stage; this will enhance community support throughout the duration of project implementation, promote ownership and sustainability of the project even when the project end.

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