



**Save the
Children**

QUIP IN ACTION

Commissioner: Save the Children

Countries: Tanzania, Mozambique, Zimbabwe

Sample size: 30-48 individual interviews & 4-8 FGDs in each country

Years of study: 2017, 2019, 2021

Projects: Linking agriculture and nutrition

Save the Children (SC) is an international organisation that focuses on improving children's lives through programmes working on a variety of issues including education, health, poverty and nutrition. Staff lead on activities based in their country and collaborate with donors to develop programmes abroad. These programs are then delivered by Save the Children International who work with local organisations.

SC has worked with Bath SDR on several QuIP studies, three of which were for programmes which sought to improve the **nutritional outcomes of families**, particularly women and children in farming communities. In Tanzania, this project was called Harnessing Agriculture for Nutrition Outcomes (HANO) and was funded by **Irish Aid**. In Mozambique the Linking Agribusiness and Nutrition (LAN) project was funded by **DFID** and delivered in partnership with **Helen Keller International**. In Zimbabwe the project was funded by the **Garden Trust**. All three programmes featured a comprehensive approach to improving the nutritional status of women and children in marginalised households using a range of interventions related to **water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), nutrition, agriculture, income and savings, and gender**. The outcomes particularly focused on pregnant women, mothers, babies and young children but interventions take a holistic approach - working with the wider household and community on multiple related interventions which are mutually reinforcing in their outcomes.

WHY USE THE QUALITATIVE IMPACT PROTOCOL?

Save the Children selected QuIP for these projects since they were in **complex contexts** and with **wide-ranging interventions**. Using an exploratory, outcomes-based approach enabled the research to pick up on a range of different drivers of change, expected and unexpected, finding the connections between different aspects of the project without prompting respondents through leading questions.

The approach also enabled them to look for evidence of impact where, in some cases, there was very little other monitoring and evaluation data. **QuIP does not require baseline data for its counterfactual**, instead using self-reported attribution from respondents about what they believe are the reasons for change in their lives over a defined period. This emphasis on reflecting the views of intended beneficiaries is important to Save the Children, with results moving beyond *what* has changed to **why and how change has happened**.

The use of causal maps was also important in these projects since the findings were discussed in workshops with donors and project staff to establish implications for future planning. Having access to **visualisations and source narrative statements** makes the findings more accessible and transparent to all programme staff.

APPROACH:

Interviews were conducted by local research teams with members of 48 households, as well as 8 focus groups in country 1, and with 30 households and 4 focus groups in country 2. The respondents were selected based on criteria unique to each project, including:

- **Sex** - including both men and women to understand how messages had been absorbed via different mechanisms, and to understand the impact on intra-household relationships
- **Exposure** - to a range of different programme interventions and length of time as a beneficiary
- **Location** - ensuring sufficient saturation within different districts and communities to control for external effects

Questions focused on the following broad domains, seeking to understand what changes respondents had experienced in these areas, and the drivers to which they attributed these changes:

- Health and hygiene
- Farming
- Income
- Food consumption (for all members of the household)
- Spending and saving
- Household relationships
- Community relationships
- Overall wellbeing

For reasons of access to the locations and respondents, it was not possible to conduct all the QuIP studies double blinded (with neither interviewers nor respondents knowing the project that was being evaluated). Although blindfolding is an important aspect of the QuIP methodology, the exploratory design of the questionnaire and rigorous training of the researchers to conduct the interviews in an open-ended fashion and not lead respondents both act to reduce the risk of confirmation bias.

The focus group discussions (FGDs) in country 2 (see maps later) were organised according to gender and location. By conducting them away from respondents' homes, and inviting more general responses, these were intended to offer a different perspective to the individual interviews, as explained by the local research team.

'The difference was in the fact that where a respondent raised a point, it assisted the other members to ponder, reflect and comment hence enriching the experience.'

In country 1 the FGDs did not use the QuIP exploratory approach but were divided by intervention type to facilitate deeper, more confirmatory discussion about the different activities within the project. This study also included key informant interviews with CSOs and government officials to understand progress towards the longer-term goal of local sustainability of the initiatives beyond the project interventions.

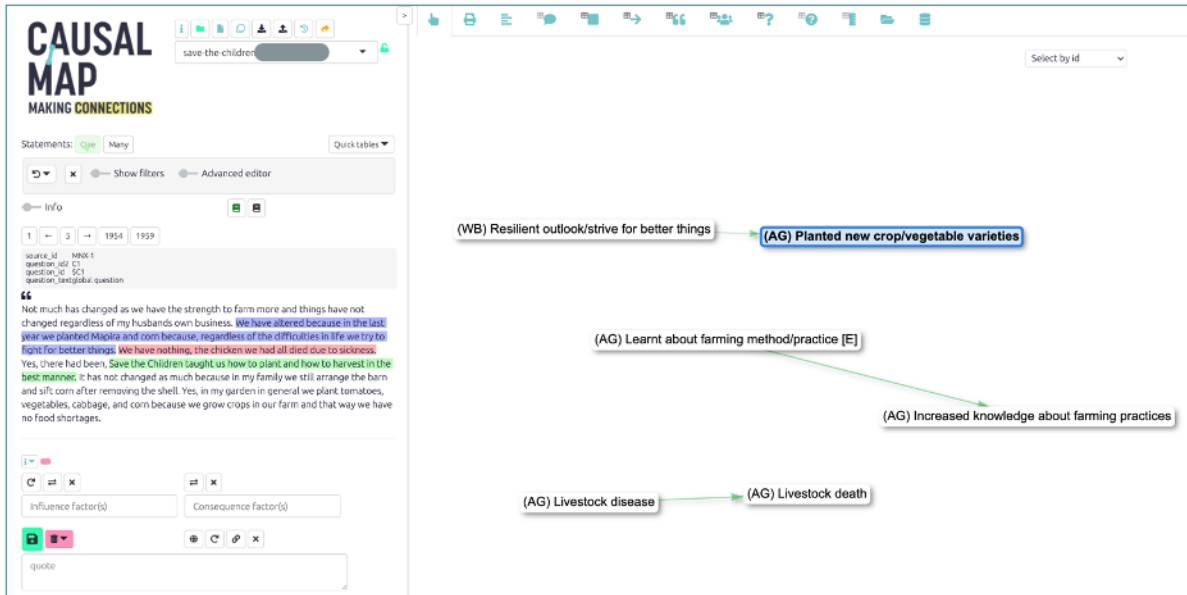
The narrative statements collected in all studies were coded using QuIP's approach to qualitative thematic analysis, focusing on causal connections where respondents have explained how a change has happened. For the Tanzania and Mozambique studies a narrative analytical report was submitted by Bath SDR, using tables, causal maps and quotes to analyse and present the findings. Project teams in Tanzania and Mozambique then held workshops using the QuIP reports alongside monitoring data to triangulate evidence. Any gaps or inconsistencies could then be followed up within the communities through further research/workshops.

In the Zimbabwe study this analysis was carried out by a Save the Children staff member from another office who has been trained to undertake QuIP analysis independently using the Causal Map software. This helps to bring the detailed learning in-house, whilst maintaining a certain independence in the analysis since they are not from the same project team. This summary does not contain analysis from the Zimbabwe study.

FINDINGS

Findings in Tanzania and Mozambique were wide-ranging, unique to each project and confidential, so will not be broken down in detail between projects for this case study. Instead, some example causal maps will be shared, demonstrating how the maps can be used to filter by frequency, location, outcomes, drivers or particular respondent groups. The more detailed filtered maps revealed some differences in experiences of change between districts and exposure to different interventions which was useful for future project planning.

Screenshot from Causal Map coding process

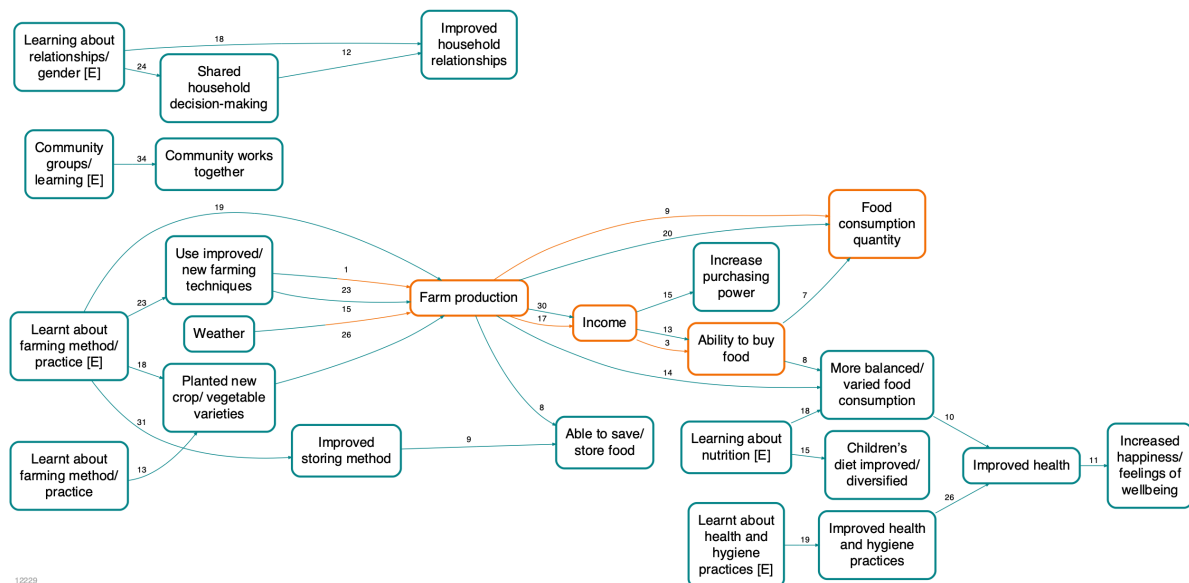


Example high level causal maps generated from stories of change

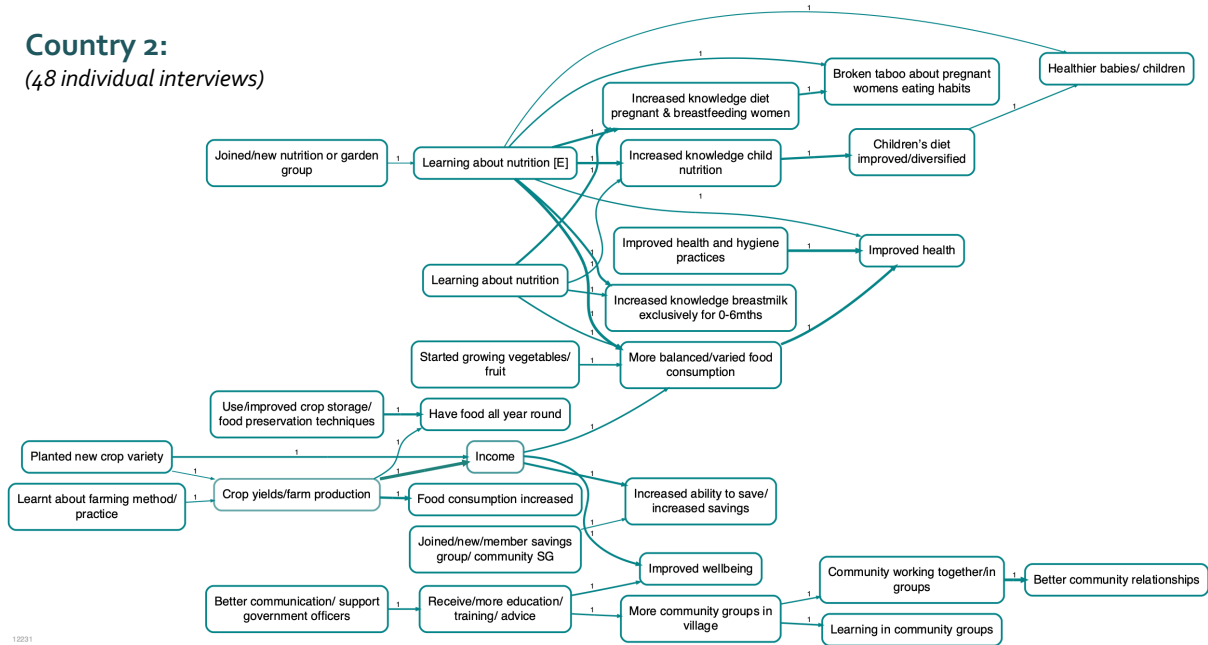
Simplified to the 30 most frequently cited factors & 35 most frequently used links. Number indicates source count (number of respondents who made that link). Different colour links denote whether more or less of this factor is leading to a change. Blue/teal represents more of something whilst an orange link represents less. More or less of one factor can lead to more or less of another, denoted by dual colour links.

Country 1:

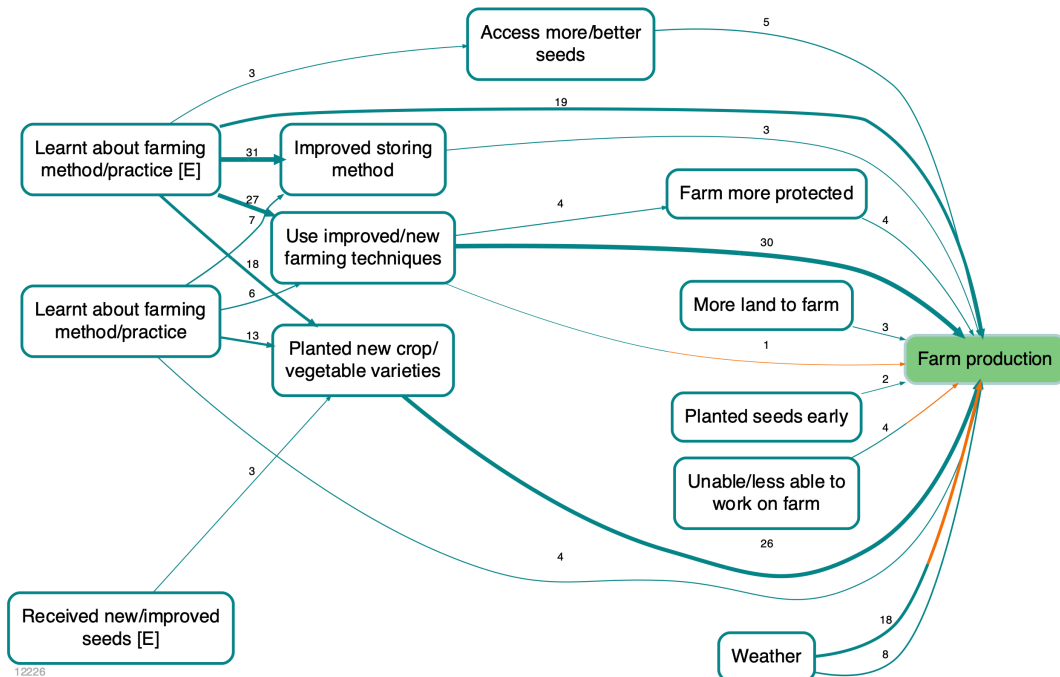
(30 individual interviews)



Country 2:
(48 individual interviews)

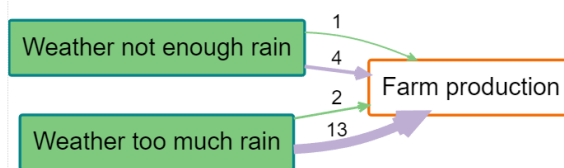


From these high level maps we can see, for example, that for Country 2 there are three main stories around the key outcomes of improved household relationships, positive and negative changes in farm production and associated food consumption, and improved health. The following maps take a deeper dive into the farm production and food consumption story. The causal map below has been filtered to show the most frequently reported factors influencing changes in **farm production** – a key intended outcome as part of improving the quality of food consumption. Although new techniques taught by Save the Children positively influenced yields, weather conditions were a constraining factor for many. All maps below use Source Count (number of respondents), which in this case is out of a total of 48.



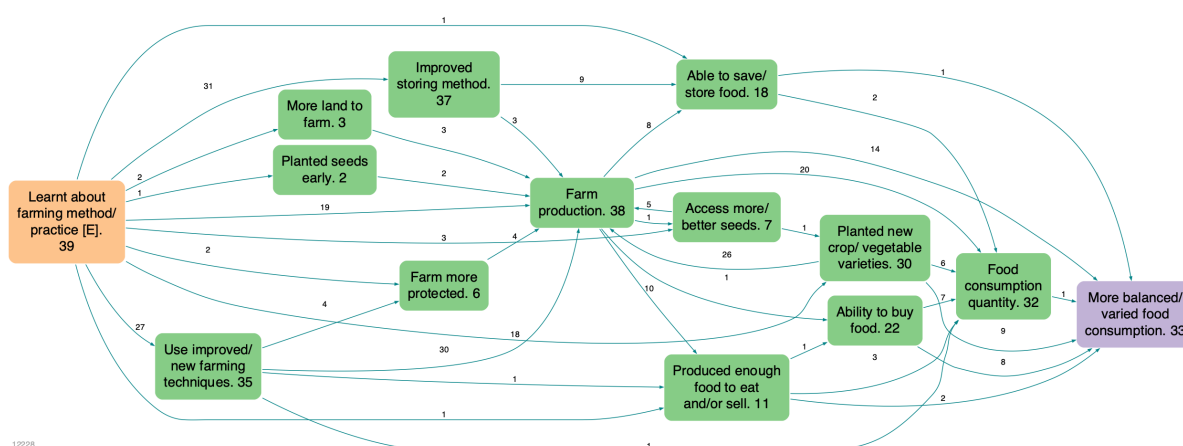
We can further unpack some of the detail in this map by zooming in and isolating certain factors.

Reports of poor weather were almost exclusively isolated to one province - the green and purple lines in this map represent the numbers of respondents coded for the different provinces. The 'green' province experienced a positive outcome linked to good weather for the harvest.



We can also look more closely at the link between skills learned from the training managed by Save the Children (marked with an E to denote an 'explicit' reference to the intervention) and the intended outcome of more varied food consumption to try to understand how strong this link is. To do this we use a feature called **path tracing** which highlights all the paths between two selected factors.

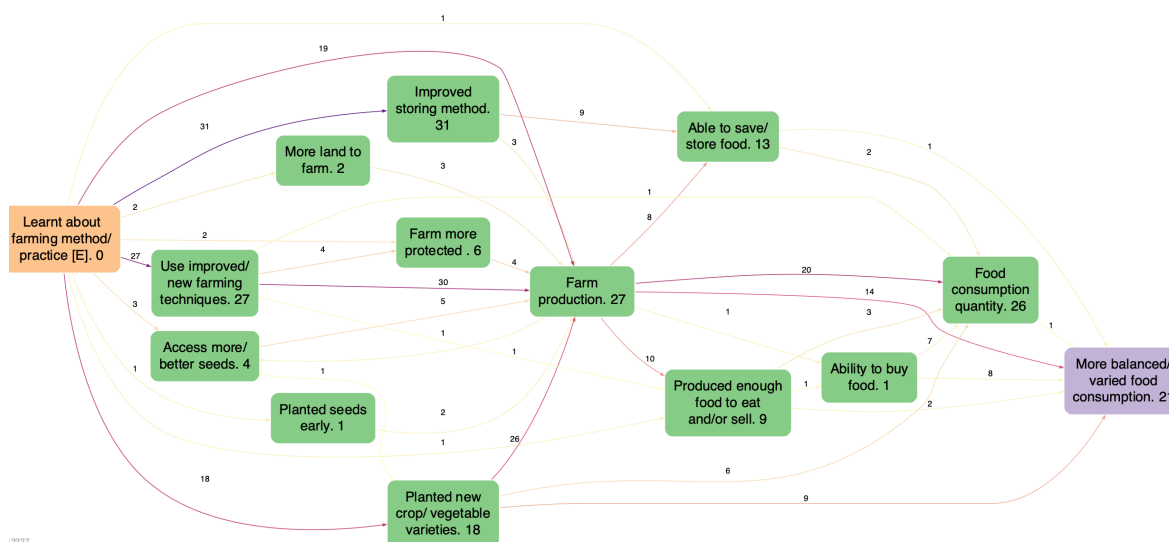
Country 2: Path trace between learning new farming methods (E) and more varied food consumption



The number inside the boxes indicates how many people mentioned each factor, the number over the link is how many made that link. We can see there are many paths between these factors which are interesting to explore. Did many farmers each tell a complete story connecting learning about farming practices to a more balanced/varied food consumption, or are the paths mostly made of fragmentary stories told by different farmers?

To test this, the map below uses **thread tracing** to see how many threads (individual farmers' stories starting with learning about farming practices) can be traced all the way down to more balanced/varied food consumption. The number on a given link or factor shows the number of farmers who told a story starting with learning about farming practices which leads down at least as far as the given link or factor. The links are coloured correspondingly: darker links contain more threads.

Country 2: Thread trace between learning new farming methods (E) and more varied food consumption



This map shows us that of the 39 farmers who made the original claim about learning new farming practices, 21 told continuous stories that led all the way to food consumption. This still indicates a lot of evidence (21 farmers) for the influence of learning about farming practices all the way down to more balanced/varied food consumption but makes it clearer that another 12 farmers did mention more balanced/varied food consumption but did not say that this was directly or indirectly influenced by learning about farming practices.

Findings from the Tanzania study and detailed reflections on what people's perceptions of change tell us about how transformative mechanisms of change work were written up in Chapter 7 of the QuIP casebook, **Attributing Development Impact** (a free e-book can be viewed at the link below). This includes a more detailed summary of the context and findings, including Box 7.4 which summarises what **worked well**, **what didn't work well** and **recommendations** which came out of the QuIP follow-up workshops. One of the chapter contributors from Save the Children is quoted (Copestake et al 2019: 57),

"Schmidt recalls, 'I was floored by the results and the changes QuIP was able to pick up on and document, as per testimonials from the community. Especially as I would say my expectations were quite low in terms of what impact we could hope to see, given inconsistencies in the design and implementation of the project.'

With the project due to end, the study offered immediate feedback to staff in Lindi Region about activities to persist with, to review and to stop. Save the Children also had similar projects starting up in two other regions... and were able, according to Schmidt, to take some of the evaluation findings and apply them to their work on these new projects.

'We can understand what worked well and did not work well with HANO and make appropriate changes to the design of this new project.'

For more information on QuIP: <https://bathsdr.org/about-the-quip/>

For more information on Causal Map: <https://www.causalmap.app/>

Attributing Development Impact book:
<https://practicalactionpublishing.com/book/105/attributing-development-impact>