

QUIP IN ACTION



COMMISSIONER: SELF HELP AFRICA

COUNTRY: KENYA

SAMPLE SIZE: 48 INTERVIEWS, 8 FOCUS GROUPS

YEARS OF STUDY: 2023

PROJECT: EXPLORATORY RESEARCH INTO BUBAYI AND RIFT VALLEY PRODUCTS' IMPACT

Self Help Africa (SHA) help to manage the AgriFI Kenya Challenge Fund, financed by the European Union and co-funded by SlovakAid, which supports agri-enterprises including **Bubayi** and **Rift Valley Cotton Ltd (RVP)**. Bubayi works with bean farmers and RVP works with cotton farmers; both aim to increase income, food and nutrition security of smallholders through training, providing inputs and improving access to markets.

SHA commissioned a Qualitative Impact Protocol (QuIP) evaluation to better understand what impact Bubayi and RVP are having on farmers in the area and explore how other factors are affecting intended outcomes for farmers' lives and livelihoods. The study focused on counties in West Kenya county; 24 farmers who work with Bubayi in Narok and Bomet counties were interviewed as well as 24 farmers who work with RVP in Homa Bay and Kisumu counties.

WHY QUIP:

QuIP was used to establish any self-reported changes in intended outcomes, and to better understand the reasons behind those changes. Bubayi and RVP's theory of change state the following impact goals:

- More farmers start growing beans/cotton
- Farmers see an increase in quality and quantity of crop
- Improved food consumption and nutrition security in the household
- Increased income
- Increased resilience
- Increased decision-making power of women
- Increased participation of youth in agriculture

There are variety of different factors impacting agricultural practices and yields - the QuIP evaluation was used to help establish what role interventions played in the complex range of influences affecting these outcomes.

APPROACH:

A team of local researchers conducted interviews in the local language with 48 farmers and facilitated 8 focus groups. The researchers worked completely independently of the SHA project team and had no knowledge of the projects or hypotheses being tested. This 'blindfolded' approach was used to mitigate confirmation bias and ensure that respondents were not limited to discussion of only one intervention (i.e. Bubayi or RVP) or project activity.

The interview was divided into the following relevant domains, based on the key outcomes from Bubayi and RVP's theory of change:

- Agriculture, including agricultural practices, yields and agricultural inputs
- Income, both from agriculture and other sources of income, spending and saving
- Nutrition, what is grown for consumption and consumed within the household
- Relationships, intra-household relationships and how the community work together, share ideas and make decisions regarding farming
- Overall wellbeing and hope for the future

A final section, used in most QuIP studies, asked respondents about community groups, programmes or organisations they engaged with; respondents were asked to detail their involvement with them and rank them in order of significance.

QuIP studies use purposive, stratified sampling – focusing on a small sub-sample of intended beneficiaries. The sample was split evenly between the four counties these organisations work in, with 12 respondents in each. To improve understanding of the experiences of farmers of different genders and ages, the sample was further split into women, men, adult and youth where possible (classed as below 35). Additionally, 8 focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted. FGDs are used to check and triangulate with the data collected in individual interviews. Two groups of 6-7 participants were facilitated in each of the 4 counties, split by gender but with a mix of ages

FINDINGS

Bubayi and RVP aim to be reliable buyers of farmers' produce to provide smallholders with a reliable source of income. This study has found that informal and formal knowledge sharing through community groups and field days reportedly led to changes in agricultural practices, and many of these changes increased yields, income and nutrition. However, despite this, few respondents (11/48) reported an overall increase in wellbeing. External factors such as poor weather and the increasing cost of agricultural inputs and other essential items were significant drivers of negative change.

OVERALL YIELDS

Most farmers (30/48) said that the yield of at least one crop was improving. Outcomes of increasing yield, as reported by farmers, were primarily improved hope for the future and increased income.

'There has been a change in the way I plant my crop more so in terms of spacing. I was taught by Bubayi that I should space my crops 30cm apart. Before, I would just plant without considering the spacing... The changes during planting and looking after the crops have led to better yields in terms of quality and quantity.'

St_828, BFA3 - Female, over 35 from Bomet

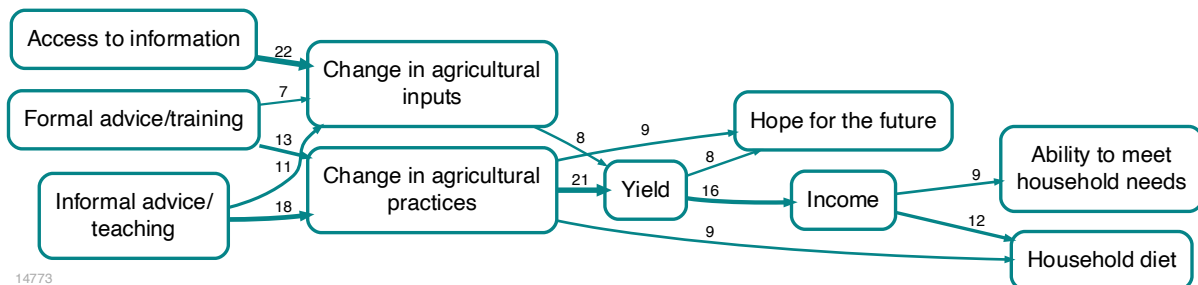
The largest influencing factor of increasing yields was

improvements in agricultural practices. 40 farmers had made changes to their practices and 21 explicitly said this had increased their yields. Changes included changing how crops were spaced, mixed cropping, and weeding more often. Change in agricultural practices such as mixed and intercropping led to improved household diet in terms of quality and variety according to eight farmers. Changes to agricultural practices also was reported to lead to more hope for the future by nine respondents, and using different agricultural inputs was also mentioned by a quarter of farmers interviewed.

Many more farmers in areas where RVP work discussed how community organised groups led to informal advice/teaching. However, some farmers explained they were collaborating less as a community, in part as they were too busy on their farms.

Figure 1: Increasing yields (excluding beans and cotton)

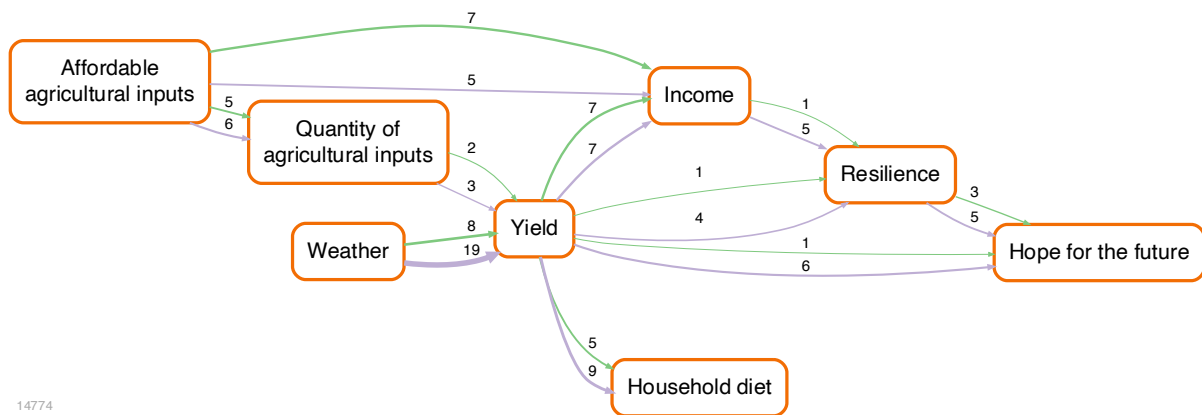
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The main negative factors influencing crop yield were weather conditions. Those interviewed in Homa Bay and Kisumu were more likely to say that poor weather was reducing their crop yields; in particular droughts and floods.

Figure 2: Decreasing yields (excluding beans and cotton) by project
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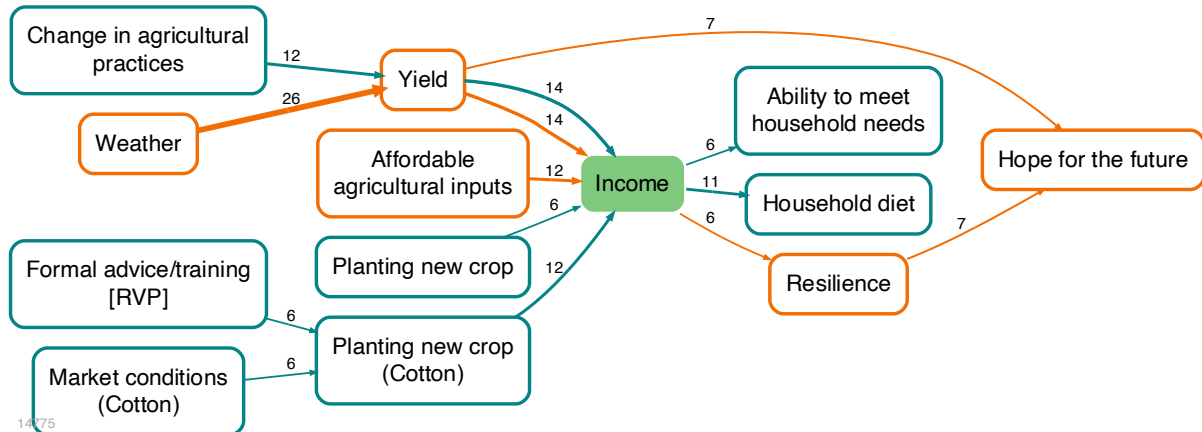
Key	
Homa Bay and Kisumu counties	
Bomet and Narok counties	



INCOME

The main positive and negative driver of change in income was yield. Half the farmers interviewed in cotton growing areas reported that starting to plant cotton increased their income. Only one farmer mentioned increased income from bean crops. Changes to agricultural practices and planting new crops were also drivers of increased yield and income – which in turn allowed respondents to improve their household diet and meet household needs such as school fees.

Figure 3: Income
 Showing links mentioned by six or more. Showing two links up and down from labels containing 'Income'



However, rising costs of agricultural inputs also led to reduced income, and for some this led to a feeling of reduced resilience as they were relying on using savings to meet their needs.

NUTRITION

Reduced yield was also the most reported driver of decreasing household diet, and where income had reduced this affected some farmers' ability to buy good quality and varied food. For those farmers who had experienced increased income they said their diets had improved in range and quantity.

For many farmers these negative and positive drivers interacted meaning the change they experienced, good or bad, was not as extreme as it may have been. For example, one farmer in Kisumu explained how increased income from cotton meant she could buy more food, but climate change meant the quality of the food she harvested was reduced.