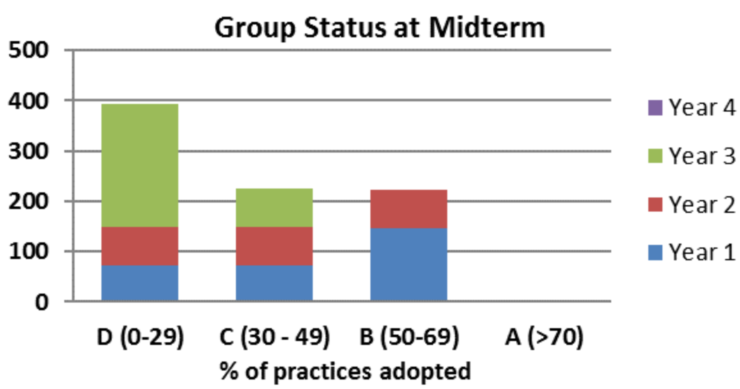
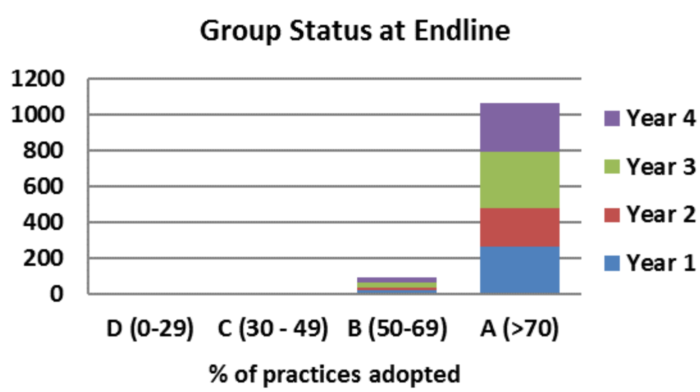
CARE's Participatory Performance Tracking Tool

A Step by Step Guide for Use
Completed January 2015





Special thanks for the contributions from:

Strengthening the Dairy Value Chain (SDVC), Bangladesh
Pathways to Empowerment: Bangladesh, Ghana, India, Malawi, Mali & Tanzania
Graduation with Resilience to Achieve Sustainable Development (GRAD), Ethiopia

and

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Figure 1 Countries where the PPT is being used from the monitoring and evaluation of CARE programs.

PPT Value Chains

Bangladesh: dairy, indigo, chili peppers, and potatoes
Ethiopia: livestock fattening, honey, pulses, barley and maize
Ghana: groundnuts and soy
India: maize and rice
Malawi: groundnuts and soy
Mali: rice, millet, and shallots
Tanzania: sesame and cassava

History

The *Participatory Performance Tracking **(PPT)** Tool* enables a program to track individual and group level adoption of key practices in order to streamline data collection and strengthen program results. This tool was developed in 2009 for the *Strengthening the Dairy Value Chain **(SDVC)*** project in Bangladesh, where it was used with 35,000 women working in the dairy sector to double their dairy related income. CARE Bangladesh implemented SDVC from 2007 to 2012, and the team created the first participatory tracking tool, which allowed for the tracking of participant adoption rates of 10 key dairy management practices and helped groups to monitor their own progress. Ultimately, CARE Bangladesh applied the PPT with over 1,200 producer groups during the project and the tool has since been adapted in Bangladesh and beyond, supporting CARE's work in seven countries and across over 3,000 groups. In 2012, CARE's six country *Pathways to Secure Livelihoods* program adopted the PPT to reach 50,000 women in agriculture beyond the dairy sector. Finally, the *Graduation with Resilience to Achieve Sustainable Development **(GRAD)** Project* in Ethiopia adopted the PPT to support 65,000 participant households with measuring their success in regards to increased food security. CARE Ethiopia has applied the PPT to multiple food security areas including agriculture, finance, gender, nutrition, and climate change. To date, the PPT has been used in seven countries across Africa and Asia and applied in 16 value chains.

What is the Participatory Performance Tracking Tool?

The PPT is used both as a **management tool** and an **outcome monitoring tool**. It allows for the evaluation of **group dynamics** and **performance**, with support from group leaders and field facilitator coordinators. Meetings should be organized regularly to conduct the tool, facilitate dialogue around adoption of key behaviors and practices, and capture data on individual and group performance. This data can be aggregated at the district, regional, national, or global level in order to analyze how groups progress over time. Data may also be disaggregated by the year that groups began participating in the program to determine success at different time points. Cohorts can be compared in order to learn what is working in the field and where there may be gaps in program implementation.

Data from the PPT may also be analyzed according to practice area, such as agriculture, financial inclusion, or nutrition. This allows for the identification of **high and low performing groups** and allows CARE to study what makes them successful or what causes them to struggle. The PPT may also inform **management decision making**, and managers may reallocate staff and resources to struggling groups. Finally, the PPT provides groups with a means to assess their own progress, which empowers and creates transparency within groups. Groups and individuals also identify their own performance gaps, which creates momentum and pressure to improve.

The PPT can be structured to capture information on the most common activities completed by a group, as well as factors of particular importance to a program, including gender inclusivity, savings, and broader financial inclusion. However, the tool does need to be tailored to each value chain promoted by the initiative because the practices for adoption are unique to each value chain.

A Two-Part Monitoring and Evaluation Tool

The PPT consists of two parts, which allow for the monitoring of the adoption of key practices at both an individual and a group level. The **Individual Tracking Sheet** documents the performance of each individual group member in relation to the individual performance areas laid out by program staff and group leaders. An example of an individual level practice that could be included on the Individual Tracking Sheet is the adoption of an improved seed variety. The **Group Maturity Sheet** tracks the performance of the group as a whole, and documents how the group is working together on topics such as leadership, record keeping, and gender equity. An example of a group capacity that could be included on the Group Maturity Sheet is the practice of gender equitable governance in the group. Evaluating a combination of individual practice adoption and group capacities allows for a more comprehensive picture of what is happening at both the individual and group level as a result of your program[1]. *However, you do not need to adopt both the Individual Tracking Sheet and the Group Maturity Sheet if your program is only interested in monitoring one of these dimensions of key practice adoption.*

Group #	Key Practices					Total
Member	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	
101	X	X	X		X	4
102		X	X	X		3
103	X		X			2
104				X	X	2
Total	2	3	4	3	3	15/25

Individual Tracking Sheet

Group Level Practice (i.e. governance)		
Level	**# of groups**	**%of groups**
A	2	14.3
B	4	28.6
C	5	35.7
D	3	21.4
Total	14	100

Group Maturity Sheet

Figure 2 Case Example: Pathways Program

PPT Case Example: Pathways Program

CARE's Pathways to Empowerment is a six country program that seeks to improve the productivity and empowerment of women farmers in more equitable agricultural systems. This program has utilized the PPT across its six target countries: Bangladesh, Ghana, India, Malawi, Mali, and Tanzania. The program utilizes 11 domains (soil and water management, use of inputs, gender, etc.) that are categorized into pre-planting, planting, harvest, and post-harvest across all six countries. This ensures that the monitoring and evaluation data is comparable across multiple countries.

Findings of the 2013 PPT data indicate that producer groups are engaged in 58% of the recommended practices that have been identified for their value chain across all six countries. Groups had the highest rates of practice adoption in the domains of soil and water management, post-harvest management, and gender. The biggest challenges with group engagement were in the areas of marketing, record keeping and finance, and spraying for pest and vegetative disease management. The gender composition of the groups, as well as the gender of the group leader, was also indicative of adoption of practices. Groups of all females had higher levels of practice adoption in the domains of input and land selection, soil and water management, and the use of inputs. Interestingly, the performance of groups with participants of both genders was independent of gender composition; however, groups with female leaders engaged in more of the recommended practices.

[1] Since the PPT is a participatory monitoring tool there is the potential for bias since all of the data collection is based on self-report. Social desirability bias may result because participants are evaluating their behaviors in front of a group and may not be completely honest so as not to feel embarrassed or encourage the continuation of funding for the program. However, a good monitoring system will have a system in place to verify the data that is coming out of individual self-reflection in order to mitigate misreporting and/or over reporting.

Is the PPT The Right Tool For You?

In order to determine if the PPT is the correct Monitoring and Evaluation **(M&E)** tool to use for your project, run through the list of questions below with your team:

- ☐ Are you working with groups?
- ☐ Have you clearly identified and defined the capacities you are trying to build or the desired behavior changes you are trying to support?
- ☐ Do you already have a clear capacity building or training plan and approach?
- ☐ Would participatory review processes enrich the group capacity building approach you have already developed?

"For me, the PPT is a tool which allows all levels actors to understand what went well, what went not well, the opportunities missed, and indicates the remedy to move the gap. As a whole the PPT is a tool which meets the basic rationale for monitoring & evaluation: accountability, learning & improvement, and communication."

-Teferra, Learning, Design & Measurement Manager CARE Ethiopia

If you answered "yes" to all four questions above then the PPT may be a beneficial M&E tool for your project. The PPT can be adapted to a variety of groups, including producer groups and integrated Village Savings and Loan Association **(VSLA)** groups, with the potential to adapt for maternal and child health/breastfeeding support groups. The PPT allows programs to capture multiple dimensions of food security, such as climate change, nutrition, financial inclusion, etc. However, before adopting this tool for your project, make sure that it aligns with your capacity building and/or training plan.

Steps for Developing Domains and Indicators

In order to adapt the PPT for your program, you will need to follow 5 key steps. Each step is outlined below, along with key questions you will need to address along the way.

Step 1*: *Define key practices to be promoted in each value chain and group level characteristics to be monitored. Take time to work through each tool thoroughly, identifying potential questions and/or challenge areas.

- What value chains are group members engaging in?
- What are the key agricultural practices that group members are engaging in?
- How do agricultural practices bridge across value chains?

Key Things to Keep in Mind:

1. Domains must align with the practice areas you are promoting. For instance, planting.
2. Indicators within each domain must align with the key practices you are promoting. For instance, under planting you might have specific spacing and depth practices you are promoting that you want to track.
3. All indicators for individual practices must be yes/no questions to simplify the process and analysis.
4. The tool needs to be simple and brief enough for community facilitators to apply.

Step 2: Develop draft domains and indicators for the tool. Both the Individual Tracking Sheet and the Group Maturity Sheet can be refined to align directly with specific interventions promoted by the program.

- What indicators can be collected that reflect progress on the key practices in which the group members are engaging?
    - For example, if you are trying to promote the adoption of a certain type of seed then you can track how many members have adopted that type of seed.
- How are these indicators measured/quantified?
    - For instance, if you want to have an indicator such as 'managing a profitable income generating activity **(IGA)**', you need to define how 'profitable' would be measured. This needs to be part of your training process for the group members so they can understand how 'profit' is being evaluated and then respond with the appropriate key practice.

Step 3: Validate domains and indicators with key farmer leaders. Once draft domains and indicators are defined, they must be validated with a set of group leaders. The focus of this step is both on ensuring the domains and indicators are the right priorities and that they are simple and easy to understand. These mini-focus groups allow group leaders to provide feedback on the domains and indicators that program staffs have developed.

Step 4: Develop a pictorial version of each targeted practice in the Individual Tracking Sheet. Pictures may be used for the training or promotion of the particular practice. Using a pictorial tool makes it easier and more engaging to apply the tool across a large number of groups and group members, including anyone that is illiterate. The pictures need to be intuitive and easy to associate with each targeted practice.

Figure 3. Sample PPT Tracking Sheets from the Pathways program in India. The team created pictorial representations of key practices and then used checkmarks to indicate which practices on the PPT an individual or group has adopted. This approach also works as a means of tracking the adoption of key practices instead of having participants use stickers to indicate which practices they have adopted.

***Step 5: Conduct a workshop with a sample of group leaders to refine the Individual Tracking Sheet*.** Once the pictures are identified, project facilitators should again engage with group leaders to present the tool, train the leaders on its use, and gather input on improving it.

How do I apply the refined tools in my project?

Step 1**: **Train your staff. Applying the tool will begin by organizing and conducting a training with your field staff. Training should take at least one day and topics should include:

- Objectives of the tool
- Introduction to the tool
    - How to facilitate the participatory process of data collection
    - How to capture and calculate the scores and justifications
    - How to use the scoring for future planning and action

Step 2**: **Identify Program Specific Targets. For programs that are being implemented in multiple countries, the program staff comes together to identify targets that they hope to reach across contexts. These targets will be included on the PPT for all groups across countries and value chains.

Step 3**: **Engage Groups to Identify Group Level Performance Targets. With support from CARE, farmer leaders from each group conduct a participatory needs assessment to identify practices they want to adopt. The results of this assessment lead the groups to set performance targets.

Step 4: Train/Coach Group Leaders in Organizing and Conducting Routine Reflection Sessions. Group leaders will need training to understand how to run a basic meeting with group members to review the performance targets for the previous period, gather information from members on practices applied by each person during the current period, post the results on a large chart on the wall, and then lead the group in reflecting on any necessary course corrections or challenges.

Step 5**: **Group Leaders Conduct Routine Reflection Sessions. On a routine basis (ideally quarterly), the leader facilitates a reflection on the group's targets and recaps key lessons from past sessions.

- Group members are asked to recall the key practices they learned about during the past period.
- The leader provides a briefing to the members on the pictures associated with each of the key farm management/financial services practices promoted in the group to this point.
- Group members recall which practices they have adopted and collect the relevant pictures to depict those.
- Group leaders collect the relevant pictures and place these on a PPT matrix on the wall to map out who is doing what.
- Group leaders facilitate a discussion among the group about the results of the PPT exercise against the group's initial targets.
- Group leaders capture the results on the PPT sheet and groups discuss priorities/course corrections for the next period.

Monitoring Producer Group Performance Over Time

The PPT allows CARE to categorize producer groups according to the following performance thresholds:

Category A - Groups that are prepared to graduate from support from CARE and whose members have collectively adopted at least **80%** of the practices promoted by the program.
Category B – Groups that are performing well and have adopted between **51-80%** of the practices promoted by the program.
Category C – Groups that are lagging behind somewhat and/or struggling to adopt the practices being promoted by CARE. These may also be newly recruited groups and will have adopted between **26 – 50%** of the practices promoted by the program.
Category D – Groups that are failing to adopt key practices and may be at risk of dropping out of the program or are newly recruited. These groups will have adopted between **0 – 25 %** of the practice promoted by the program.

Step 6**: **Participate in the Review Session Every Six Months to Capture Group Maturity. Every six months, a CARE or partner field staff member should join the groups to co-facilitate the review session. This will be the session during which groups and CARE leaders calculate the Group Maturity score.

Step 7: Report and Analyze Results Every Six Months. It is critical that teams include a review process every six months to assess overall group performance and identify any critical areas for increased attention.

- Farmer leaders generate the total group score, which is collected by field staff
- Group leadership and field staff meet to review the session and complete a 'group performance sheet'
- Farmer leaders lead group discussion on areas where the group is performing well and where they are struggling
    - *Questions to help identify the areas in which the group is struggling and where they are performing well:*
        - Which practices do not have a lot of stickers?
        - What is different about the practices that have a lot of stickers and those that do not?
        - What practices are easy to adhere to?
        - What helps to facilitate/enable this?
        - What practices are you struggling to adhere to?
            - What prevents you from completing these practices?
        - What does this teach the group moving forward?
- Members develop an action plan to address areas of concern, including providing feedback to field staff
    - *Questions to help develop and action plan:*
        - What are concrete strategies that group members can apply to make progress around practices that have few or no stickers?
        - What are concrete strategies that field staff can apply to make progress around practices that have few or no stickers?