

## Seasonal Calendar

### I. Description:

The Seasonal Calendar is a group exercise that helps people explore and understand how ecological, social, and economic aspects of their lives and wellbeing change throughout the year. Specific variables can be used to help people explore agro-ecological and climatic variations that may better inform their own planning, decision-making and risk mitigation and disaster preparedness initiatives.

### II. Purpose:

The Seasonal Calendar reveals annual and cyclical patterns in a community that deepen people's understanding of the effects of changes throughout the year. Possible patterns and seasonal correlations that people may learn from include: climate (rain fall and temperatures), crop sequences (pests and diseases), food availability, forage patterns, work loads (agriculture and non-agriculture), work type and load differences (between men, women, and children), social events, migration, income and expenditures, credit requests and repayment, clean water availability, and disease prevalence. The Seasonal Calendar also calls people's attention to the similarities and differences in livelihood-, community- and gender-specific workloads.

### III. Project Cycle Application:

1 - Assessment Phase	Can be used to help people develop their community profile of cyclical patterns, including heavy or light rainfall, workloads and income, and high or low market prices, food supply, nutrition rates. Can be used to help people generate predictions for the future.
2 - Planning Phase	Can be used to help people identify times of the year appropriate for specific activities (e.g., trainings when livelihood labor is at its lowest or before planting season begins).
3 - Implementation & Monitoring Phase	Can be used to motivate participants to re-examine their activity plans and/or pace of progress. Can be used to help participants identify and adapt to additional related seasonal issues (i.e. household illnesses, school payments, market demand) that may positively or negatively impact targeted interventions. Can be used to help participants measure progress and discern if seasonal patterns are on target.
4 - Evaluation Phase	Can be used to help participants identify positive seasonal adaptations they made, and/or confirm that detrimental pre-project cycles and patters have changed or been minimized throughout the year.
5 - Reporting Phase	Can be used to help participants illustrate successes of their program activities, e.g., less seasonal fluctuation of well-bing indicators such as disease prevalence or household income.

### IV. Facilitation Steps:

#### Step 1: Preparation

The Seasonal Calendar may be drawn on the ground, but to enable future reflection and use it should be drawn on paper. Materials required include paper and markers. Post-it notes or index cards may also be used to capture events with writing or with symbols. If these are not available, you can prepare by asking participants to collect local materials (e.g., stones, seeds, leaves, twigs).

#### Step 2: Introduction

**Institution Strengthening:** Participatory Methodologies

**Tool:** Seasonal Calendar

The exercise may take one hour, depending upon the level of debate and conversations within the community. Introduce the Seasonal Calendar as an exercise to explore community members' different activities throughout the year. Remind them that all present are invited to join in the conversation and share their ideas.

### Step 3: Exercise Instructions

- 1<sup>st</sup> Divide the participants by gender so that the different perspectives of men and women can be compared and analyzed for the same variables of the exercise.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> With both group members sitting in separate circles, place a sheet of paper and markers in the middle of each circle.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Ask for a volunteer from each group to draw a chart/matrix with 12 columns, then ask that they label the column headings with the months of the year (using their local language).
- 4<sup>th</sup> Then explain to the groups that they will be identifying the changes and fluctuations of 10 different "**agricultural-related activities**" in their community throughout the year. Therefore, each group should add 10 rows to their chart/matrix, i.e., 10 lines below the 12 months.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Begin by asking the groups to indicate their perception of the rainfall pattern in their community. Ask them to choose a symbol for "rainfall" and draw it on Row 1; then ask the groups to indicate under each month the relative amount of rainfall their community receives.
  - *Note: The groups should together decide how they want to represent their responses (i.e., using numbers, symbols or rocks). For example, they may choose to depict the amount of rainfall using numbers (1 being little, 10 being the most), by drawing an image (small being little, big being the most), or by using rocks (one being little, 10 being the most). The representation they choose should then be continued for the subsequent variables.*
- 6<sup>th</sup> One-by-one introduce the remaining variables. Each time be sure to ask the groups to start by identify the month(s) that is the most plentiful or scarce, and then to fill in the times in between. Remind them to take their time to discuss/debate their responses before recording on their seasonal calendar. Typical agriculture-related variables include:
  1. Food availability
  2. Agriculture workload (planting and harvesting)
  3. Non-agriculture workload
  4. Crop prices (market demand for the community's #1 and #2 crop)
  5. Household income
  6. Household expenses
  7. Natural disaster prevalence
  8. Household illness prevalence
  9. Migration patterns
  10. Festivals

### Step 4: Debrief & Learning (Look, Think, Plan)

After both groups have completed their Seasonal Calendars, encourage a round of applause for everyone's participation and contributions. Then facilitate the identification of learning points using the following points of conversation:

- Lead participants in a comparison of both calendars side-by-side. Review each point, and encourage participants to discuss any significant differences, creating space for each group to explain their reasons why. Remember it is not necessary to merge the two calendars into one, but it is important that participants understand the differing perspectives.
- Lead participants in the identification of any linkages they may see among the different variables in their calendars. Ask participants to explain why and/or how different variables are connected.
- Ask participants to identify the variables that would shift in time if the climate pattern/rainfall shifts.
- Ask participants what activities they might do to protect themselves from shifts in rainfall or other climate patterns. Ask what they might do different in their agriculture and non-agriculture practices.

## V. Useful Hints:

- Be cautious and sensitive when comparing the male and female calendars, so that one is not considered 'right' and the other 'wrong'. Affirm the value in both as equally important perspectives.
- Do not impose a Western calendar (i.e., 12 months, Jan - Dec) if it is not used in the local context.
- Let the community construct the calendar rather than directing the process. Allow for the addition of other variables according to participants' interests and local context.
- **Play can help people to overcome barriers** of social hierarchy or language. Encourage those who don't often express their opinion or are less articulate to join in the conversation.

## VI. Pairing Pathways: The Seasonal Calendar is useful when paired with:

- Mapping and analysis exercises such as the People's Map, Transect Walk, and/or Pair-Wise Preference Ranking to better analyze and decide upon agriculture interventions (e.g., fluctuations in crop input and harvest prices discovered in a Seasonal Calendar could inform better land-use and production decisions).
- Well-being Map to explore how high and low wellbeing households are resilient (i.e., experience minor seasonal fluctuations in key variables).

## VII. Examples of Tool Usage

Image 1: Example of a Seasonal Calendar comparing rainfall, crop production, migration, loans, household cash flow, income & expenditure, festivals, employment, and disease prevalence, Episcopal Relief & Development, Climate Resilience Workshop, Sri Lanka 2018



Image 2: Example of a Seasonal Calendar comparing children’s happiness, school expenses, students’ attendance, disease prevalence, agricultural activities.

SEASONALITY — ANALYSIS												
Months	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT
Criteria												
Happiness 5=high 1=low	☹️ 3	😊️ 5	😊️ 5	😊️ 4	☹️ 2 • Drinking water	😊️ 4	😊️ 5 • Children day and matches	☹️ 2 • No money • Farming	☹️ 1 • No food • Work load	😊️ 5 • Yam • Vacation	😊️ 4	😊️ 5
Proposed Change								Vacation	Vacation			
School expense TN = Text & note book C = Extra classes F = Free P = Pocket expenses B = Biro (pen) E = Excursion	P 200 B 20	P 200 B 20	C 100 F 200 P 200 B 20	E 100 P 200 B 20	P 200 B 20	C 100 F 400 P 200 B 20	E 100 P 200 B 20	P 200 B 20	P 200 B 20	P 100 B 20	TN 2600 C 100 F 400 P 200 B 20	E 100 P 200 B 20
Students' attendance Present Absent	⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙	⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙	⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙	⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙	⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙	⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙	⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙	⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙	⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙	⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙	⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙	⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙ ⊗ ⊙
Diseases children suffer from				← Measles →				← Sore throat →				
				← Typhoid stomach →								
Activities children engage in	Farming, harvesting hunting, football		Harvesting honey, clearing farmland, trading in yam, hunting, fishing			Prepare yam heaps, planting, trading in yam, hunting, fishing, football			Planting of tomatoes, pigeon pea, beni seed; football			
Participants: Ocheme Ameeh, Timothy S. Akor and others Facilitators: Somesh Kumar, Paul and Andrew												

**VIII. Sources**

FAO PRA Training Manual (1999)

<http://www.fao.org/3/x5996e/x5996e06.htm#6.2.7.%20Seasonal%20Calendar>