

GALS Coffee Livelihood Tool 1: Challenge Action Tree for increasing coffee incomes

Written by Linda Mayoux as part of Hivos, GALS@Scale project, September 2014. All resources and further details are available on www.galsatscale.net.

The Challenge Action Tree (CAT) for increasing incomes from coffee is an adaptation of the generic Challenge Action Tree (CAT) tool. It is the first of the four livelihoods strengthening tools that are used in Phase 2 at 3-6 months into a GALS process. It is best when preceded by the GALS catalyst process to develop participatory and communication skills. But could be preceded by a one-day life visioning workshop to place coffee in the context of broader life goals and introduce the vision journey. Or it can be integrated as a stand-alone in multistakeholder workshops on coffee production.

Why use this tool?

Most technical training for coffee production is delivered without reference to previous trainings people may have had, often duplicating effort and teaching things people already know – in some cases better than the people delivering the training. Training often does not differentiate between the knowledge and training needs of women and men, or look at ways of addressing gender based challenges. Service organisations and other chain stakeholders may be unaware of gender issues, or the factors apart from price that may influence farmer choice of trader. Importantly stakeholders up the chain often do not know or understand the (often different) solutions and strategies that women and men farmers employ to address the challenges they face. This means they are unable to support and build on existing strategies on the ground, and waste resources doing things that people can do for themselves. Leaving few resources for things that farmers think are important and cannot address alone.

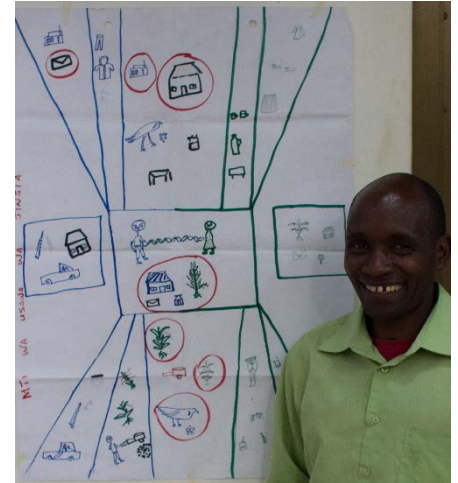
What do you gain by using it

For farmers

- Understand the different causes of low coffee incomes: production, marketing and household gender balance.
- Understand the interlinkages between gender issues in the household, production and marketing and increasing incomes for men as well as women.
- Share and exchange ideas with others for solutions to different dimensions of the challenges and identify at least 5 individual 'SMART action fruits' or commitments to be tracked over time.
- Reinforce visual communication and participatory skills and learn an example of the Challenge Action Tree generic tool that can then also be used for other livelihood activities and issues.

For businesses and organisations

- To reinforce technical training, bring together the knowledge from different women and men farmers and identify gaps in what has been understood from previous trainings.
- To identify the different gender challenges to increasing incomes from coffee and potential solutions that can increase uptake of technical improvements.



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- To understand ways in which their services can be improved to increase reliability of quality supply.
- To promote farmer responsibility and commitment to improvement.

For multiple stakeholders

- To provide a structured way of analyzing and sharing different perspectives on challenges and potential 'win-win' solutions and develop a concrete plan of action to move forward.

Who applies the tool and for whom?

This tool can be used by individual farmers or households, by groups or in larger workshops. Once learned it is easy for farmers to use themselves on their own or in groups to analyze and track strategies for increasing incomes from coffee and can be disseminated through individual peer sharing.

Organisations or businesses can use the tool to quantify the challenges and strategies employed, either through aggregating individual and group trees, or as a participatory tool in workshops. It can also be used at organization level with staff to explore understanding of issues and potential solutions from an organizational perspective.

The tool is particularly effective as a means of bringing together the perspectives of different stakeholders in the coffee chain to develop win-win strategies that address multiple challenges at multiple levels, including gender issues. In workshops participants sit in separate groups of women and men, subdivided by other relevant criteria to make groups of about 10. There can also be separate groups for other stakeholders eg traders at different levels. Each group first does their own tree. Following standard GALS facilitation practice, the tool is introduced interactively with participants coming up in turn to draw on a flipchart at the front of the hall while the other participants draw their own trees in notebooks. Depending on numbers of participants and facilitators, the main presentation may be at the front of the hall in plenary or in each group separately. The group trees are then presented, discussed and combined on a parent 'win-win' tree.

Note: As with all GALS tool facilitators are referred to the generic GALS facilitation guidelines that can be found on the GALS@Scale website at www.galsatscale.net/facilitation. Particularly in large multi stakeholder workshops it requires experienced facilitation with one or preferably two lead facilitators, and some champions who can lead the groups.

How does it work?

The Challenge Action Tree for increasing coffee incomes from coffee follows the same basic steps as other GALS Challenge Action Trees, but the roots and branches are divided into 3, distinguishing production (left), marketing/ service delivery (right) and gender (middle). Depending on purpose of the workshop and levels of participant skill and experience the CAT can be used very rigorously with explicit discussion of the relationship between quality/quantity, market price and farmer profit, or discussion can be more open. Often the best strategy is to start open, then introduce these distinctions in relation to issues as they come up and as people gain confidence. Then clarify before people leave so they redraw their own individual tree at home in the way that is most useful for them, in the light also of discussions and clarifications on Tool 2 Household Coffee Business Tree.

Preferably drawings would be used, and fun drawing exercises used before to get people at ease. If time is very short, and all the participants are literate and speak the same language then things can be written. But drawing increases clarity, makes potentially conflictual issues seem more fun and makes presentation more impactful. Developing visual communication skills is an important part of multi stakeholder communication and engagement at any level.

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Cards should be colour-coded for each group, at least disaggregating by gender, so that it is easy to distinguish the different responses from each stakeholder group/ women and men on the final parent tree. Feedback quantification on different opinions of the commitments will be colour-coded using blue, black and green pens with achievement tracking later in red. It is important therefore that both coloured cards and pens are available and these are used systematically if the tool is to be used rigorously rather than as a loose catalyst for informal discussion.

Step 1: Draw the trunk or challenge – in this case increasing incomes from coffee

Someone comes up to the front and draws two lines in the middle of the flipchart to represent the trunk. They then put a symbol for coffee, indicating (an example) current production quantity/quality/number of trees/price/income/profit at the bottom towards the roots and target quantity/quality/number of trees production/price/income/profit at the top towards the branches. At the mid-point of the trunk they put symbols to represent gender balance in the family.

They then put four lines down from the trunk to the bottom of the paper to divide the space into 3 roots, and four lines to divide the top of the paper into 3 branches (see diagram).

As the person draws as the front, the other participants draw their own situation on a double page of their notebooks. The presenter draws in their own book as soon as they sit down.

Step 2: What are the roots? dimensions of the challenge

In CAT for increasing coffee incomes the roots are divided into three basic categories – production to the left, market/service to the right and gender relations in the family in the middle – in order to make sure all three are adequately discussed.

Each person (or in pairs) is given 6 cards on which to put their challenges - at least 1 per root. One person (or pair) comes up and places on their most important challenge, asking how many other people have that challenge, gathering in any similar cards and placing them together in a stack on their respective root to take them out of the discussion. Then another person (or pair) comes up and repeats the exercise for a new challenge – this time inviting someone quiet from the back. And so on until all the challenge cards have been placed on their respective roots. Once all the cards have been placed, each card stack can be quantified through a show of hands of people to whom it applies, and numbers written on the top card in each stack.

Important Note: Clarify that the middle root is about gender relations, i.e. differences and inequalities between women and men in the household, not just 'household'. Anything else about the house or household, e.g. leaking roof on the storage bins or lack of working space, should go under production or marketing unless it is directly related to gender inequality.

Step 3: What are the branches? for each cause a solution

In the increasing coffee incomes CAT the branches are also divided into three basic categories – production, household and market – in order to make sure all three are adequately discussed. And a solution must be suggested systematically for each challenge, following the same process as for the roots. Clarify again that the middle branch is about gender relations and differences and inequalities between women and men. Each person (or pair) is given 6 cards and must identify 6 solutions corresponding to a specific challenge, at least 1 for each branch. Explain that solutions need to be specific. No general solutions like 'training' or 'awareness' can be accepted. We need to know exactly what training for whom, whose awareness about what.

People (or pairs) come up and place their solutions in the same process as for the roots. It is extremely important here that the solutions correspond to the challenges and are systematically placed in the same order up the branch. When all the solutions have been placed in stacked groups, they are then quantified by a show of hands to indicate who thinks

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these are viable solutions (whether or not they are currently implementing can be quantified as part of step 4) and put the number on the top of the card stack.

STEP 4. What are the fruits: Individual SMART action commitments

Hypothetical solutions are not enough – that gives only leafy branches. The fruits are the most important part of the tree – that is what we grow the tree for. Fruits represent the individual actions which each person can take to start to bring about the solutions. For each branch there should be many individual fruits. IMPORTANT: Each fruit must be SMART, i.e. specific, monitorable, achievable, relevant and timebound.

Participants have time for individual reflection to decide 5 or more solutions (at least 2 on the gender branch) which are most relevant for them in moving forward (ie not things they are doing already) and decide on a SMART action fruits for each which they can start to implement. They put these on their individual tree in their own books. These individual 'commitment fruits' are then fed back to the group and quantified through hands up with colour coding: blue for people who are doing already (already ripe fruit), green (unripe fruit) for people who are aiming to do it and black (withered fruit) for those who do not want to do it or think it does not apply to them (eg strategies for married people if someone is single). People are invited, but never forced or embarrassed, to say why they do not want to do something – often there are good reasons and this opens up the discussion and makes it more honest.

It is important to photograph all the trees at this point as they will be changed in the plenary.

Step 5 Combining women and men's trees

The different stakeholder trees are then fed back to the plenary by two group members to look at differences – particularly on gender. One group member presents and the other places the best card representing the commitment fruits on the respective branch of the parent tree. If it is the same as from another group then the cards are placed so that each can be seen (that is why group colour-coding of cards was important) When all the commitments are in While this is being done the facilitators make a list of the commitment fruits from each group and make a card with a symbol for each. There is then a voting (hands up or secret ballot depending on sensitivity at this stage) to agree on the commitment fruits – colour-coding numbers for each stakeholder group so that it is easy to identify areas of consensus and areas of disagreement. If time permits, and discussion is not too sensitive, then it is useful to start by quantifying with the same colour-coded pens as Step 4 how many people already implement a particular solution (blue), how many do not agree (black) or does not think it applies as



well as how many commit to it (green) and in that order to start and end on a positive note. If time is short then the focus should be on the constructive (green fruit) commitments and discussion around these to get a clear list of agreed ways forward for each stakeholder group, and each person. But the organisers can both refer to the group presentations for their wrap-up and do a post-analysis of the group trees to see how many people had already done things, who things do not apply to etc, bearing in mind that at the group stage people did not have all the options in front of them. People also finalise their own commitments – they may have got some further ideas from others.

Step 6 Tracking over time

Achievement of the fruits is then tracked at individual level and also shared within groups. Achievement turns the green fruits to red. If there is a follow up workshop with the same participants then change over time can also be measured.

