 

**USAID/Zimbabwe Knowledge Summit: Lessons Learned**

Case Study #3: Stakeholder Engagement

The following are hypothetical stories developed by synthesizing specific and general information about food security programs in Zimbabwe as they relate to government, private industry and other stakeholders. *This story is followed by targeted questions intended to stimulate discussions around current challenges in food security related programs.*

Themes Discussed:

* NGO collaboration
* Private sector involvement
* Government sector cooperation
* Committee sustainability

# The Farming Coordination Committee (FCC):

The Farming Coordination Committee (FCC) is a coordinating body comprised of representatives from different NGOs and funded by multilateral organizations. The goal of the FCC is to promote conservation agriculture and other agricultural technologies in the region and coordinate maintenance of the community assets. The committee has been touted as a massively successful information sharing mechanism and as being integral to developing conservation agriculture strategy. The FCC has also been seen to reduce overlap between partners and create coherence, through its regular meetings which bring together stakeholders.

It is noted that beneficiary community leaders were invited to participate in the FCC, but rarely do so. NGOs and their implementing partners are the primary participants in the FCC. Despite wide participation by NGO partners, other stakeholders could be described as absentee. The type of attendance and participation in the FCC has led observers to question whether it can become a truly sustainable entity after the larger projects are completed or the NGOs leave.

Participation by private sector companies has generally been lacking. Opportunities to synergize with commodity associations or companies went untapped in many of the food security programs taking place. Initiatives set by the FCC to increase crop diversification and establish wholesale groups found this lack of coordination with local markets to be a challenge.

The sustainability of the FCC is in peril, as its foreign funding quickly disappears. Since its attendees are primarily from NGOs and implementing partners, post-program participation in the FCC is inconsistent.

## Discussion Questions:

1. What are the pros and cons of having stakeholder groups run by NGOs as opposed to community members?
2. How can the FCC have been structured more sustainably?
3. How could the FCC be designed to increase stakeholder involvement? Should the focus be on NGOs meeting or should it be the involvement of the broader stakeholder community?
4. What stakeholders need to come to the table for such committees to have long-term success?
5. How can project implementers more effectively engage the private sector? In what ways, if appropriate, could the private sector be included in the membership of groups like the FCC?
6. In what ways could the government help the FCC become a sustainable entity and meet its goals?