

CORNELL STUDY WITH COMACO

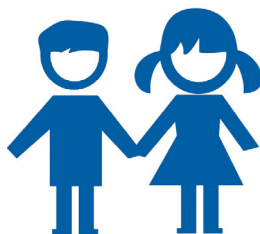
Zambia's Luangwa Valley is one of Africa's most diverse and vibrant wildlife areas and also home to over 60 rural farming communities. In the absence of economic opportunities, many of these farmers resort to animal poaching and other activities that negatively impact their fragile environment. This is especially in the dry seasons when rain-fed farming is not possible. To improve the lives and livelihoods of these farmers while preserving the environment, KickStart is working with Community Market for Conservation (COMACO), another organization committed to improving food and income security for smallholder farmers and which has additional expertise on simultaneously promoting good environmental stewardship.

In 2014, KickStart and COMACO implemented and studied the results of a pilot project to determine the effects of a holistic agricultural support program combining irrigation, access to shallow wells, agroforestry techniques and a range of educational modules on improved farming practices, nutrition and family health. To evaluate the impacts of the project activities, researchers from Cornell University used a rigorous, clinical research approach to collect data on nutrition, health and household economic activity among participating farmers. As a control group, they also looked at a group of neighboring farmers who were not participating.

Compared to the control group, farming households participating in the pilot program experienced the following impacts:



Women with pumps were 50% less likely to be underweight.



Children in families with pumps were 50% less likely to have stunted growth.



Households with pumps were 160% more likely to own livestock.



Households with pumps were 200% more likely to live in homes made of high-quality materials.



86% of farmers were able to provide their families with 2-3 meals per day during what are normally the “starvation months”.