Teaming with opportunities to increase incomes in Zambia.

Over 65% of the Farm Business Advisors (FBAs) in Zambia are couples, in farming teams, who take part of their work week to visit their local peers and offer advice and assistance. Zambian FBAs are trained by iDE and input suppliers on farming best practices, expanding their personal agricultural experience with a deeper understanding for what is possible with quality seeds, equipment, fertilizers, and chemicals to increase production. Their farms often serve as demonstration plots for these products to show their friends and neighbors exactly what can be gained.

Because market conditions vary widely across Zambia, many FBAs may start as informal sales-people, but evolve as time goes on into working directly with suppliers to get increased access to materials as a formal distributor and sales agent.

Others may shift focus to consolidating harvests to better attract wholesale buyers and to ensure local farmers are able to sell and make profit from what they produce.

The FBA model has been proven in concept in Zambia over the last few years and is now beginning to scale-up. Ultimately FBAs should be able manage a profitable agro-shop and other businesses, successfully secure financing from financial institutions, and provide a wealth of knowledge and services to their farmer clients in their local communities. iDE Zambia is currently supporting nearly 400 FBAs in making that journey.

Over the next two years, iDE will explore how best to strengthen and formalize FBAs through an efficient business model that allows FBAs to attract investment and make wholesale purchases to pass on group discounts to farmers. Access to lines of credit would enable FBAs to buy and sell inputs like seeds and fertilizers to their farmer clients or provide finance options to farmers who want to bridge the gap between when they plant and when they are able to realize the profit from their harvests.

Photo Caption

Justino Kasapato and her husband Mr. Banda, beam with pride. They are farm business advisors for farmers in their community - selling seeds to help them diversify their crops, introducing them to new technologies that will increase efficiency and grow their resilience to changes in weather or pests, and share knowledge and techniques with them to help grow their businesses.
Zambia Context

In Zambia, 60 percent of the country’s labour force works in the agricultural sector and 80 percent of people living in rural Zambia depend on agriculture for their livelihoods. There are over 1.5 million rural households in Zambia that focus on food crops for household consumption and commercial sale. Typically rural farmers are trapped in a cycle of low investment and low returns, having little or no access to the goods and services that are needed to improve productivity and connect them to the market.

Zambia FBAs By the Numbers

- 65 clients per 1 FBA
- 45,985 clients served to date
- Average annual income: $570 from service fees, output, input, & crop sales
- Each FBA travels an average of 10-15km per day
- Encourage and apply emerging technologies

iDE

iDE creates income and livelihood opportunities for poor rural households across Asia, Africa, and Latin America. iDE builds markets in a range of sectors, including agriculture, water, sanitation, hygiene, and access to finance.

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