

Calendar of Activities (Seasonal Calendar)

by

Dr. 'Kunle Oyegbile



- An **activity calendar** can be created to depict the daily, weekly, or monthly **schedule**:
 - A ***daily calendar*** or schedule shows the main activities that will take place during the day.
 - A ***weekly calendar*** can focus on the events that will occur during the week.
 - A ***monthly calendar*** is good for highlighting events that take place on a regular basis throughout the month

- A calendar is either based on a table with a horizontal linear time-scale with indicators along the vertical axis – or as a circular representation of time, such as in a 24-hour clock to show daily routines.
- It is fill in with symbols representing indicators such as activities, weather or crop seasonality, or labour activities.

- A calendar allows people to visualise patterns of variations over particular periods of time - such as across weeks, seasons, one or several years.



- A calendar of activities is a PRA method that determines patterns and trends throughout the year in a certain agricultural community.
- It can be used for purposes such as rainfall distribution, food availability, agricultural production, income and expenditures, health problems and others variables.

- Calendars of activities can provide quantitative information over a year or season by representing relatively weighted levels of availability of an indicator such as food, cash or water; or to represent expenditure of labour hours on a particular activity.

- During qualitative research, participants according to gender or age can be asked to complete their own calendar of activities, to provide more insights into how different groups function within a community and/or household.



- **Purpose of Calendar of Activities:**
 - **a calendar** is use to identify days of activities:
 - to be informed about or to agree on a future event and
 - to record an event that has happened.
- Days may be significant for agricultural, or social reasons.

- Calendars can help to remember **what** we have to do, **where** we are going to be, and **when** we will be there.
- It keeps a track of which day of the week events fall and when special events are going to happen.
- It to helps us stay on task as well as be productive and prioritize,
- **By using them to schedule our daily work we can avoid distractions and get back on track when interrupted.**

- Seasonal calendars as tools for knowledge transmission
- Seasonal calendars to promote understanding of Indigenous knowledge.



- Seasonal calendars are useful for evaluation as they can help analyse time-related cyclical changes in data.
- Seasonal calendars give insights into processes and needs at a local level, and help to stimulate discussions on patterns of variation over time.
- They provide baseline information useful for planning.

- Seasonal calendars are often used as a participatory tool to find out community perceptions on time-related variations in indicators such as:
 - weather patterns,
 - time spent on labour and other activities,
 - level of food security and nutrition,
 - illness (in people, crops or livestock),
 - cash availability, and
 - production patterns and yield.

- Seasonal calendars offer simple participatory tool that does not require a high level of expertise (or literacy) to use.
- Repeating seasonal calendars at different intervals in a project cycle helps to identify problems that need addressing at particular moments, and also to indicate evidence of project impact.

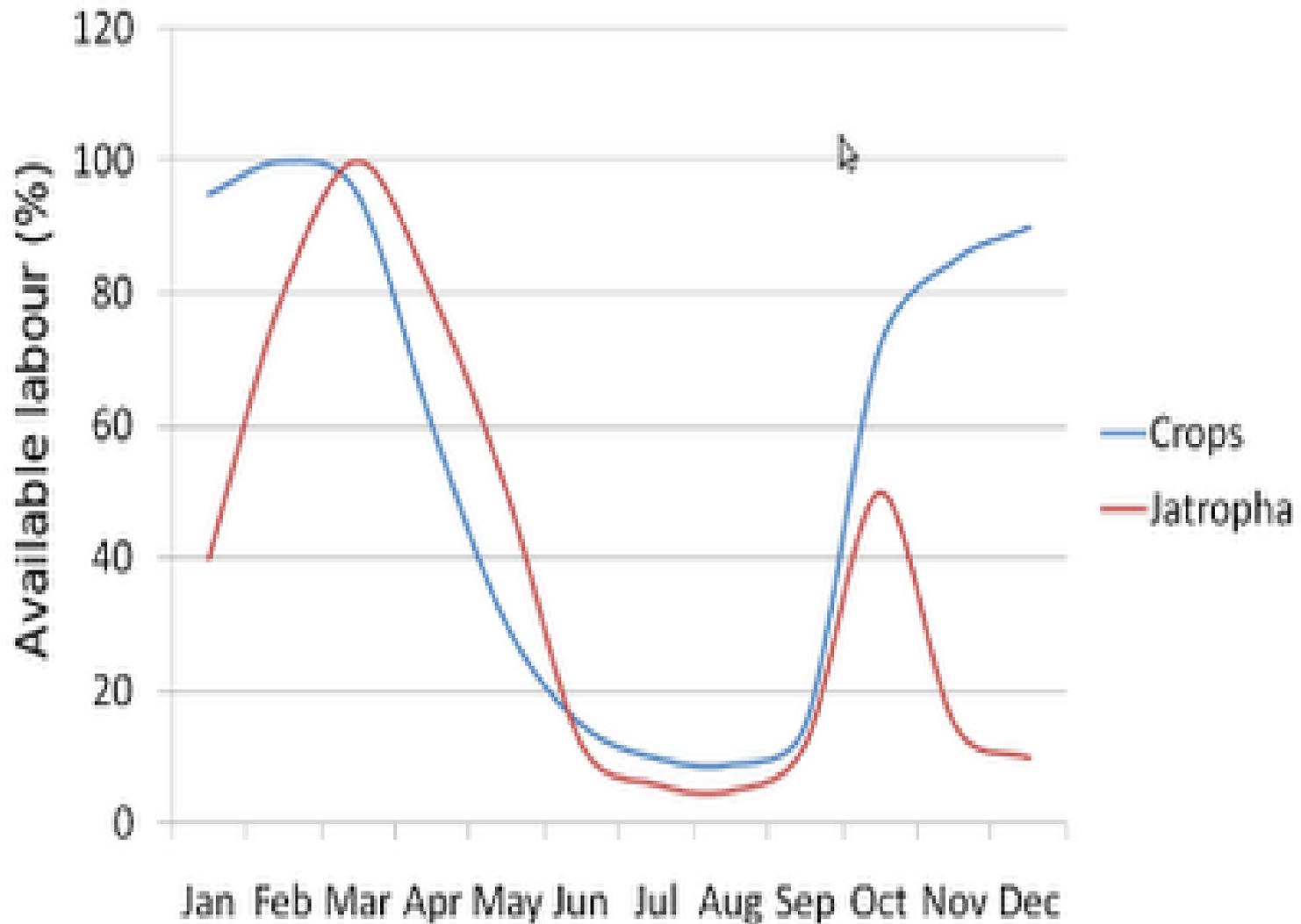
- **Case Study of the use of Seasonal Calendar.**

- A research project in Northwestern Mozambique sought to improve small-scale farmers' livelihoods through the addition of an oil-tree (*Jatropha curcas*) to provide cash and bioenergy for the household. Based on observations, the project assumed that labour peaks for jatropha would not coincide with those of the current crops produced.
- After three years, this hypothesis was tested. Different farmers' clubs made two seasonal calendars, showing labour demand over the season for both types of crops.

- These calendars indicated that the labour peaks did in fact coincide (graphical representation of their two seasonal calendars shows).

With this information, the project then tested whether the jatropha harvest could be delayed until after other crops had been harvested. This turned out to be feasible.

However, the farmers decided after some experimentation to harvest jatropha at the same time as other crops after all. They stated that harvesting jatropha is a relatively relaxing task that they liked to mix with more heavy duties.



- **Lesson learnt:**
- ***The seasonal calendar was a helpful tool for decision-making because;***
 - It was a simple way to get farmers' perceptions on the labour hours spent on the different activities.
 - By finding out that the labour peaks coincided, the project could find other ways to combine the two types of crops.

- **Choose to include seasonal calendars in M&E systems:**
- to be able to visualise time-related patterns of change, and links between different indicators.
- to have a simple visual tool to help stimulate discussions.
- to get insight into how time is used relatively (i.e, by comparing different activities; by comparing different population groups; by weighting time spent).
- to understand local perceptions on changes over time.

Steps in developing calendar of activities

- Guide the discussion to bring out the most precise information possible.
- Agree on a standardised set of symbols to ease comparisons of calendars over time.
- If consensus cannot be reached on a “typical” or “average” calendar, ask participants to make individual calendars (particularly when it comes to daily routines).

- Ask different groups in the community (e.g. women, men, old, young, farmers, landless labourers) to fill in their own calendars, to understand specific issues each group confronts.
- Comparison of calendars drawn up by different population groups may reveal differences in responsibilities and perception that can lead to useful discussions, new information and ideas on making changes.
- Formulate the indicators to get the information you want.

Key Questions on Seasonal Calendar of Activities:

1. What are the busiest months of the year?
2. At what time of the year is food scarce?
3. How does income vary over the year for men and women?
4. How does expenditure vary over the year for men and women?
5. How does rainfall vary over the year?

Key Questions on Seasonal Calendar of Activities:

6. How does water availability for human consumption vary over the year?
7. How does livestock forage availability vary over the year?
8. How does credit availability vary over the year?
9. When are holidays and how many days in which month?
10. When are most agricultural work carried out by women?

Key Questions on Seasonal Calendar of Activities:

11. When are most agricultural work carried out by men?

12. When is most non-agricultural work carried out by women

13. When is most non-agricultural work carried out by men?

14. Which could be the most appropriate season for additional activities for men and women? What time constraints do exist and for what reason?

Seasonal Calendar Comparing Men's and Women's Livelihood Activities in Garafini Community

<i>Month</i>	<i>Men's Activities</i>	<i>Women's Activities</i>
January	Fishing and land clearing	Frying of mosa and yam for sale. Processing groundnuts and land clearing
February	Land clearing, Mining for gold	Harvesting of firewood and processing groundnuts
March	Fishing on the dam waters and land clearing	Buying and selling of fish and land clearing
April	Fishing and gathering of locust beans on the farm	Processing locust beans
May	Planting rice, maize, guinea corn, yam, sweet potato	Planting groundnuts, vegetables, rice, guinea corn and pepper
June	Weeding and planting continues	Weeding and planting of pepper
July	Buying and selling of shea nuts	Processing of shea nut, picking shea nuts in the bush
August	Harvesting rice, maize	Harvesting rice, maize, okro
September	Harvesting continues	Harvesting of okro, groundnuts
October	Harvesting of groundnuts, beans, guinea corn	Harvesting of beans, late planting
November	Harvesting beans, yams, sweet potato	Harvesting of beans, yam
December	Packing farm produce to house.	Assisting men to store and process farm produce

Oct
Oct

NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP
Main Harvest		Off-Season Harvest				Main Season Cultivation			Main Harvest	
Livestock Migration N to S					Livestock Migration N to S		Rainy Season			
Peak labour Demand for Harvesting		Peak labour Demand for off-season agriculture			Pastoral Lean Season		Agricultural lean Season			
Household Labour Migration								Peak Labour Demand for weeding and Harvesting		



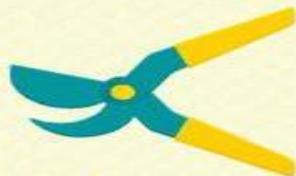
Month	Major activity
January to March	Land clearing and preparation
April	Ploughing
Mid-April	Sowing, preparation of yam mounds after the first rain of the year, plantation of groundnuts
May	Maize planting at compound farms; rice planting
August	Yam harvest, initiation of eating
Mid-August	Late crops such as cow peas' planting (apart from August 15)
September	Groundnuts, maize harvest
December	End of farming season

GARDENING CALENDAR



January

Protect your garden from frosts, winds and rain. Start planning garden plot for the next year.



February

Trim bushes and evergreen hedges. Prepare seed beds. Chit potato tubers.



March

Sow seeds. Trim winter shrubs. Clean up around the garden. Plant shallots, onion sets, early potatoes, summer-flowering bulbs.



April

Finish any digging. Start sowing outdoors. Sow hardy annuals and herb seeds. Watch out for late frosts.



May

Sow and plant out bedding. Earth up potatoes. Plant out summer bedding. Mow lawns weekly.



June

Hoe weeds regularly. Sow Beans. Water trees. Harvest lettuce, radish, other salads and early potatoes



July

Water tubs and new plants. Deadhead bedding plants. Harvest zucchini.



August

Water your garden. Prune summer-flowering bushes. Collect seeds. Harvest sweetcorn and other vegetables



September

Harvest fruits and vegetables. Pot up herbs. Sow broad beans and hardy peas. Plant spring flowering bulbs.



October

Clear up fallen leaves. Move tender plants into the greenhouse. Plant out spring cabbages.



November

Start a new compost heap. Plant tulip bulbs. Plant out winter bedding. Prune roses.



December

Check garden winter protection. Prune apples and pears. Take hardwood cuttings.

- **Reference:**
- Geilfus, F. Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), (2008). *80 tools for participatory development*. Retrieved from www.betterevaluation.org
- Guijt, I., & Woodhill, J. International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Office of Evaluation Studies. (2002). *Managing for impact in rural development: A guide for project M & E*, Annex D. Retrieved from website: <http://www.ifad.org/evaluation/guide/annexd/d.htm>

*Thank you for your
attention!*



MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

