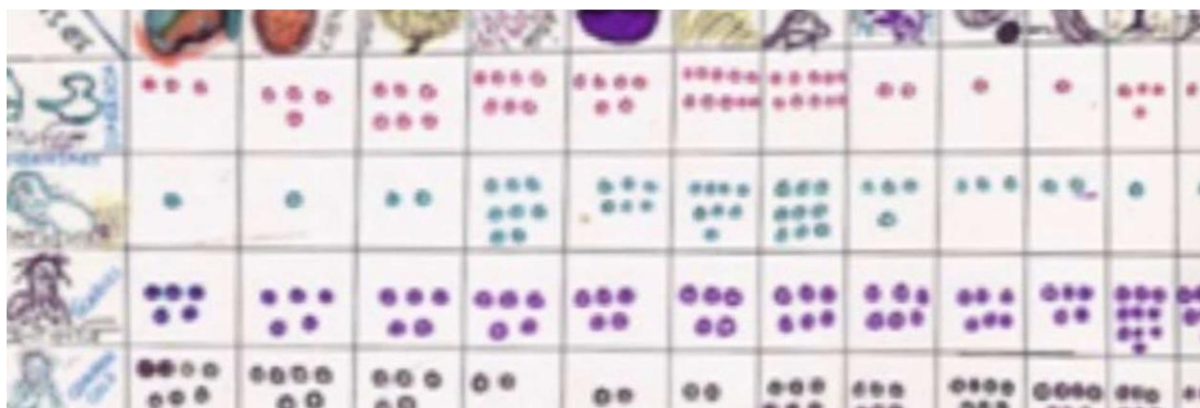


Seasonal Calendar



To help participants to analyze the distribution of agricultural work / crops / illnesses / etc. over the year.

Cross referencing between different calendars can be useful to support analysis (e.g. between a hunger & abundance calendar and health calendar). Seasonal calendars can also be used to plot changes over a period of years, by comparing the current situation with the situation 5/10/20 years ago or producing calendars for a series of years. Seasonal calendars can also be used to plan future actions, looking ahead and determining steps towards the desired change.

Steps in the Process

Here we describe the simple steps used to produce a seasonal calendar. For more detailed descriptions of some of the different types of calendar see references below.

1. The participants agree on the topic to be explored (agricultural tasks / crops / illnesses) and the time units to be used (e.g. months or seasons). These are represented using local materials or written on cards as words or symbols.
2. A calendar is drawn up with the cards or symbols representing the units of time (e.g. months) placed on the ground in a row across the top of the calendar.
3. The cards representing the different types of work/crops/illnesses/etc. are placed in a column down the side of the calendar.
4. For each type of work/crops/illness/etc. ask whether there is more in some months than in others. Depending on whether there is a lot / a medium amount / a little / none, place small pebbles (e.g. 5 for a lot, 0 for none) against each month.

5. When all the months have been covered, ask if this is accurate or if the participants want to make any adjustments to the overall calendar.
6. Support the participants to reflect on, discuss and analyze what the graphic reveals to them.
7. When it's agreed, ask participants to copy the whole calendar onto a large piece of paper.
8. Discuss and agree strategies and actions.

Suggestions for Use

- An agricultural calendar can be used to discuss agricultural work burdens over the year (planting, harvesting, etc.) and how they affect the lives of participants. Issues to explore might include gender workload balance, impact of technology, changes over the last twenty years, and the availability and impact of agricultural extension services. See Reflect Mother Manual, p. 121-125.
- A basic purchases calendar can be used to plot the price trends of items that participants buy over the course of year (or more), analyze the reasons for these changes and explore ways of mitigating against price increases. See Reflect Mother Manual, p. 156-157.
- A cultural calendar involves identifying the major cultural and social events each year. Issues to explore might include how different cultures have developed and how they can be retained in future, the link between languages and culture, and factors that have either strengthened or undermined different cultures. See Reflect Mother Manual, p. 222-223.
- A gender workload calendar can be used to analyze the paid and unpaid work done by men and women over the year. Issues to explore might include whether the division of work is fair, how the availability or lack of public services impact on the workload of women and men, changes that might be introduced to improve the situation. See Reflect Mother Manual. P. 126-130. See also daily activity chart and activity mapping.

- A health calendar can help to explore the prevalence and causes of illnesses in the community. The calendar can be constructed based on perceptions of which illnesses occur most at different times of the year or participants could be asked to indicate specific incidences of each particular illness over the past year. Issues to explore might include the reasons for illnesses being more prevalent at different times of the year, the most popular and / or effective forms of treatment; the barriers to effective treatment (cost, distance, etc); the importance of traditional healers; and the quality, cost and availability of public health services. See Reflect Mother Manual, p. 102-106.
- A hunger and abundance calendar can be used to plot the availability of food and income through the year to determine the times of year when there are serious shortages and times of abundance and to develop strategies to improve the situation. See Reflect Mother Manual, p. 158-159.
- An income and expenditure calendar can be used to analyze income and expenditure of households through the year. See Reflect Mother Manual, p. 131-134.
- A market prices calendar can be used to identify the major items that participants produce and sell and to plot their changing prices at different times of year. Prices might be plotted for a period of up to five years for a clear analysis. Issues to explore might include how to avoid selling crops when prices are lowest, the factors that impact the relative value of different crops, the impact of intermediaries on prices paid or received, and the use of ICT to access up-to-date market information. See Reflect Mother Manual, p. 154-155.
- A rainfall calendar is used to plot levels of rainfall month-by-month often over a number of years. Issues to explore might include what happens when the pattern is broken or when there are floods or droughts; the impact on crops, livelihoods and health; survival strategies, etc. See Reflect Mother Manual, p. 160-161

References

- Reflect Mother Manual, ActionAid International, 1996,
- Communication & Power, ActionAid International, 2003, p. 1002.