



China: Empowering a New Generation of Smallholder Entrepreneurs and Fostering Resilience in Rural Areas

QUICK FACTS

Throughout the years, **China has developed expertise** in many different areas including the **development of entrepreneurial skills in smallholder farmers and fostering resilience in rural areas.**

Amongst other initiatives, WFP and China partnership **“Demonstration in Africa/Asia by Africa/Asia” (DAA)** aims to empower young smallholder farmers and members of farmers organizations to become entrepreneurs and link smallholder farmers to markets using a **South-South approach.**

The DAA programme can also be used to **share China’s expertise in disaster risk reduction to strengthen rural resilience** with countries facing similar challenges. China’s strategic model to respond to shocks can be transferred and adapted to other countries.



CHALLENGE

Smallholders in many developing countries face competitiveness challenges due to their lower productivity, and limited access to markets. To address the causes of their vulnerability, an increasing number of countries are looking for **adaptable expertise and technologies from China** acquired through years of experience in this area. China has a range of affordable and applicable agricultural **technologies** for **smallholder farmers** to share that can help to promote food and nutrition security in Africa and Asia.

Smallholder farmers are also **more susceptible to the adverse impacts of climate change and natural disasters.** In this scenario, China has developed a strong **expertise in disaster risk reduction** due to its own experience in responding to shocks. As a result, China has a number of **initiatives that can be shared** with countries facing challenges in preparing and responding to shocks.



APPROACH

One concrete example of South-South cooperation to empower smallholder farmers is the “Demonstrations in Africa/Asia by Africa/Asia” (DAA) programme, which is supported by the **WFP China Centre of Excellence.** The centre is a partnership between the Government of China and WFP set up in 2016.

Through the DAA programme, the WFP China Office is working with partners to **foster leadership among a new generation of smallholder farmers** across Asia and Africa. It aims at extending China’s affordable and applicable agricultural technologies to smallholder farmers in Africa and Asia. Selected lead farmers are being equipped through: 1) **In-field training (on-job coaching)** during one production season in China; 2) Access to necessary **agricultural inputs or seed funds as well as support** to establish their demonstration households back home; and 3) **On-site instruction** through Chinese agricultural experts on family farms in the lead farmer’s home countries. Upon completion of the training, participants are ready to adopt a **“train-the-trainer”** approach to share their learnings with other members of their communities.

The DDA programme also helps smallholders to better deal with shocks and build resilience in rural areas. Lessons from China’s experience in **disaster risk reduction**, can be integrated in the DAA learning programme. China has an evolving **disaster management system, which focused on agriculture, economic development, government and professional capacity building, and disaster governance.**

China’s approach in shock response contributes to national economic development and helps to improve people’s livelihoods in rural areas.



RESULTS

Zimbabwe will be the **first country to implement the DAA programme** in partnership with the WFP China Centre. Smallholder farmers will receive **on-site training** in China and Chinese **experts will then be deployed** to their home countries to help apply China's solutions on the ground. In the case of Zimbabwe, the benefits of the DAA programme for smallholder farmers may include:

- **Multiplier effect for the benefit of whole communities:** The DAA programme targets lead farmers, who have the ability to transfer their acquired knowledge to their surrounding communities. Whole communities can benefit from it and move from subsistence agriculture to **market-oriented agricultural business practices**, lifting them out of poverty and hunger.
- **Leverage of pre-existing partnerships and evolving networks:** For example, the DAA programme in Zimbabwe can build on the existing partnership between the Government of Zimbabwe and the WFP Zimbabwe Country Office. It can complement and build on activities of the WFP-supported P4P programme.
- **Linkages with ongoing operations:** The existing China-Aid Agricultural Technology Demonstration Centre in Zimbabwe and other agricultural investment initiatives can help to enhance the programme's implementation. They can also ensure a greater reach of vulnerable smallholder farmers in Zimbabwe through the programme's activities.

In the **Zimbabwe DAA**, China's **technology and experience against drought** will be **demonstrated and extended** to local communities for climate change resilience building. The programme is expected to have a significant impact on the country's ability to **empower smallholder farmers in their daily activities, and also in their ability to respond to climate change.**



OPPORTUNITY

By the end of August 2017, WFP China received **15 DAA project proposals** that address the needs of 13 developing countries in Africa and Asia. Rolling the DAA programme out on the basis of those proposals can help China and WFP to ensure that the **programme is driven by concrete needs** of its partner countries.

Through the Purchase for Progress (P4P) programme, WFP is already supporting developing countries around the world to empower and connect smallholder farmers to markets. The DAA programme can therefore well complement WFP's existing efforts in this area. Upon successful testing of the programme in Africa, the **programme can be extended** to Asia and Latin America in the future.

The DAA programme can be customized to the needs of participating countries. For example, it can also facilitate the sharing of **China's expertise in resilience building and disaster preparedness**, with a view at **strengthening rural resilience.**



REACHING THE MOST VULNERABLE

China's transfer of expertise to other countries have a huge potential **to reach the vulnerable smallholder farmers and people living in rural areas across Africa/Asia/Latin America.**

Through the DAA programme, food security in and nutrition, as well as resilience building in rural areas can be improved by:

- Systematically targeting **young and entrepreneurial lead farmers;**
- Facilitating the **transfer of much needed technologies** and skills;
- Following a **"train-the-trainer approach"** that can maximize impact when empowering local communities.
- Customizing the training to the specific needs of developing countries and integrating lessons from China's experience in building resilience of the rural population.