



COLLECTIVE ACTION TRIALS (CATs) OVERVIEW

CATs or “Collective Action Trials” is a Trial in Improved Practices (TIPs) research methodology. Instead of making inquiries about how an individual or family might improve practice(s), CATs is based on the premise that most of the world’s societies are based on collectivities, rather than individuals. CATs allow program planners/ managers to work with a group or collective to determine and test collective actions that support improved practices and that can, with some confidence, be promoted as part of the program. CATs allows a sample of those who will take action to identify feasible and efficacious collection actions and needed program supports that will effectively address a collective need or problem.

Collective can mean the broader grouping of households – a village. It can mean a grouping of households within one compound or a grouping of neighbors who want to pull together to do something, either because they live near each other or share a some common characteristic, such as membership in the same place of worship. It can mean a group that identifies with each other, even if all do not know each other, e.g., members of an ethnic group or a group belonging to an institution, e.g., a church. This methodology can be used for any definition of “collective” you choose to use.

Because individuals and households don’t act in a social vacuum, CATs may be essential to:

- Explore actions that cannot be undertaken by a household without collective approval or knowledge and or that require the collective resources of multiple people; or that
- Require multiple members or significant group(s) in the collective, e.g., grandmothers, to initiate, reinforce or support the actions implemented by individuals or households.

CATs have 4 phases and use 4 different methodologies. All phases can be completed in one – two months.

- **Phase 1: Approval and Agreement – Group Meeting** with leaders and others to confirm that they are interested and willing to participate in the CATs
- **Phase 2: Problem and Action Identification – Series of Focus Group Discussions** (with separate groups of representative members groups of the community that relate to the issue and are comfortable talking with each other, and with community leaders.
 - ✓ FGDs with representative members of the community (see below for specifics on determining number and participant groups)
 - ✓ Group Discussion to share findings and discuss and agree upon problem and solution conclusions with collective leadership.
- **Phase 3: Action Negotiation – Engaged Decision Making** with representative members of the community
- **Phase 4: Follow Up – Fishbowl Feedback** with representative members of the community