

The Impact of Social Approaches on Agricultural Technology Dissemination <Part 5>

Effects on Farmer-to-Farmer Extension and Conclusion

The Northern Uganda Farmers' Livelihood Improvement Project (NUFLIP), in which AAI was involved from 2015 to 2021, focused on two core pillars: Market-Oriented Agriculture (MOA) and Quality of Life (QOL) Improvement. This series highlights how the social approach, Improvement of Quality of Life, affected the adoption and dissemination of MOA technologies.

Farmer to farmer extension

When disseminating vegetable cultivation techniques within communities, it was essential not only to train target group members but also to reach out to non-member farmers in surrounding areas. NUFLIP placed strong emphasis on the influence that target groups could have within their communities. During group selection, one of the key criteria was whether members were willing to share the training results with other villagers.

At the end of each training cycle, a Field Day was organized as a culmination event. Farmers presented their achievements and shared what they had learned through NUFLIP training with other community



A scene from a Field Day where participants performed a short drama to present their training results.

members. These events provided opportunities for people interested in vegetable cultivation to participate, which helped promote farmer-to-farmer dissemination.

However, as vegetable production became more successful, there were occasional cases of theft, herbicide spraying, arson, or intentional grazing by livestock. Such incidents discouraged some groups and became a challenge for dissemination. These acts were mainly caused by jealousy or envy from non-member villagers.

To address this issue, during Field Days, groups were encouraged to share their learning openly with messages such as "We welcome anyone who wants to learn" and "We don't monopolize knowledge and skills." These messages helped reduce envy and tension within the

community. Some groups also reported that, in their daily lives, by actively supporting socially vulnerable people and helping to resolve family and gender-related problems within their communities, they came to be recognized as groups not only pursuing profit but also contributing to social well-being. This recognition further helped reduce theft and vandalism.

Conclusions

For smallholder farmers, farming is closely tied to their family life. When their quality of life improves, families become more willing to work together toward common goals. In NUFLIP, this family cooperation had a positive impact on the dissemination of technologies. In particular, training on gender consideration and household financial management contributed to improving both productivity and financial capacity.

It is not uncommon for agricultural extension projects to incorporate social approaches. They are often designed to address social challenges in rural communities or to mitigate unintended



A couple working together in their vegetable field.

negative effects that may arise from technological or economic changes. However, in the case of NUFLIP, the social approach itself generated a positive synergistic effect on agricultural technology dissemination.

One notable feature of NUFLIP was that the social components were carefully designed to fit local contexts, and agricultural technical experts actively participated in their planning and implementation. The integration of technical and social approaches in an inclusive and organic manner greatly enhanced the outcomes of technology dissemination. This comprehensive integration can be regarded as one of the key factors behind NUFLIP's success.