Bridging Gender Gaps in Provision of Agricultural Extension Service Using ICT:
Experiences from Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) Farmer Voice Radio (FVR) Project in Tanzania

C. Sanga, Sokoine University of Agriculture, Morogoro, Tanzania

V. J. Kalungwizi, Sokoine University of Agriculture, Morogoro, Tanzania

C. P. Msuya, Sokoine University of Agriculture, Morogoro, Tanzania

ABSTRACT

This article was designed to present the assessment of the effectiveness of radio - based, impact driven smallholder farmer extension service system provided by FVR to enhance accessibility of extension services to women and men in the project areas of Tanzania. Specifically, this paper assessed women and men farmers' access to ICT and factors influencing the utilization of ICT to deliver agricultural information and knowledge. The paper used data from impact assessment survey of the project conducted between April 2012 and June 2012. These data were complemented by focus group discussion involving members of gender advisory panel that had been established in the selected project sites. Quantitative data were analyzed to yield frequencies and percentages. Qualitative data were analyzed by content analysis. Even though ownership of mobile phones and radio was higher among women in all study areas both men and women farmers' had almost the same percentage in accessibility to agricultural extension information. The factors that affected women and men farmers to get quality agricultural information via these ICT tools were namely: poor radio signal reception, power outrage and poor timing of radio programs among others. This is important evidence that careful use of ICT can reduce gender imbalance in agricultural extension services and information delivery.

Keywords: Agriculture Extension Service, Farmer Voice Radio, Gender, ICT, SUA

INTRODUCTION

The agricultural sector plays a central role in the economy of many developing countries including Tanzania. In Tanzania, agriculture contributes more than 50% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 60% of export earnings and employs about 85% of the working force. Agriculture is also a source of raw materials for industries (MAFS, 2001; Diao, 2007). Also agriculture sector has the highest potential for growth and development due to the availability of arable land, work force and sources of water for irrigation. Furthermore, the sector has the highest potential for reducing poverty in Tanzania because many people, especially the poor, are employed in it (URT, 2006). Nevertheless, agriculture sector experiences a number of challenges including: low prices of agricultural products, low level of technology, low level of capital investment, high price of farm inputs, poor infrastructures (e.g. roads), poor linkages with other development sectors (e.g. industrial sectors), limited extension services and unreliability of market (Diao, 2007). Despite these challenges, The Government of Tanzania is taking a number of initiatives to improve the agriculture sector. The examples of these initiatives are: Agricultural Sector Development Program (ASDP) in 2006 and *Kilimo Kwanza* under the auspice of National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP) by 2025 (URT, FAO 2008). These programs have focused on modernizing agriculture and forging institutional linkages and transformations (Haug et al., 2010).

One of the challenges for these development programs for agriculture which is normally not accented enough is a gender inequalities existing in agricultural extension service supported by ICT (Secretariat, 2001, Overholt et al., 1985). This calls for a need to look into ways of incorporating gender issues in ICT based agricultural extension service. This is the objective of this paper.

Gender in this paper is referred to as a social construct that refers to relations between and among women and men, based on their relative roles. Studies indicate that women participate actively in agriculture especially in production of food crops, but in many societies they have been excluded from training and extension service (Mbilinyi, 1994; Due et al., 1996; Beintema, 2006; Sanga et al., 2011; Manfre et al., 2013). This inequality has lowered women's labor productivity and hence affected contribution of agriculture in improving household livelihood and food security. Alidou and Niehof (2013) reported that women farmers play a great role, particularly in agriculture and cotton production, where they are involved throughout the production process but few of them are involved in the management of farmer organizations. Alidou and Niehof (2013) concludes that gender myths and stereotypes still determine the involvement of women in managing organizations and thus, the male motive in involving women in management continues to remain questionable. This is similar to

17 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/article/bridging-gender-gaps-in-provision-of-agricultural-extension-service-using-ict/114127

Related Content

Virtual Collaborative Learning: Opportunities and Challenges of Web 2.0-based e-Learning Arrangements for Developing Countries
Wissam Tawileh, Helena Bukvovaand Eric Schoop (2013). *Cases on Web 2.0 in Developing Countries: Studies on Implementation, Application, and Use (pp. 380-410).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/virtual-collaborative-learning/73065

Preliminary Insights Into the Applications of IT in Diverse Disciplines in Africa: A Systematic Literature Review
Acheampong Owusu, Obed Kwame Adzaku Penuand Frederick Edem Broni Jr. (2020). *International Journal of ICT Research in Africa and the Middle East (pp. 19-34).*
www.irma-international.org/article/preliminary-insights-into-the-applications-of-it-in-diverse-disciplines-in-africa/259886

Multimedia Curriculum Development Based on the Oval Tradition
Ella Inglebret, Susan Rae Banks, D. Michael Pavel, Rhonda Friedlanderand Mary Loy Stone (2007). *Information Technology and Indigenous People (pp. 123-125).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/multimedia-curriculum-development-based-oval/23543

Internet Lifestyle of Iranian Users
Amir Abedini Koshksarayand Tayebeh Farahani (2015). *International Journal of Innovation in the Digital Economy (pp. 1-15).*
www.irma-international.org/article/internet-lifestyle-of-iranian-users/121581

ICT for Development (ICT4D) Projects in Developing Countries: A Proposed Conceptual Framework
Md. Mahfuz Ashrafand Bushra Tahseen Malik (2010). *E-Strategies for Technological Diffusion and Adoption: National ICT Approaches for Socioeconomic Development (pp. 180-187).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/ict-development-ict4d-projects-developing/44306