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“Bridging the gap between increasing knowledge and decreasing resources”

Improving Livelihoods of Rural People through Quality Training Videos: Lessons from Access Agriculture

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Abstract

This paper addresses the contribution of quality training videos to sustainable management of natural resources and to the improvement of farmers' livelihoods.

Limited access to relevant knowledge on good farming and natural resources management practices is a key factor affecting livelihoods of farmers and natural resource management (NRM) stakeholders. Most often, project-based livelihoods' and NRM improvement initiatives involve, among others, sensitisation, training, and promotion of income generating activities. Yet, the solutions proposed to farmers and NRM stakeholders tend to disappear once projects come to an end, with the problems often remaining or even getting worse. Therefore, a main challenge for development actors is to make relevant knowledge on technical, social and institutional practices and innovations easily and sustainably accessible to farmers and NRM stakeholders. To help address this challenge, the international NGO Access Agriculture promotes the production, translations and dissemination of quality training videos inspired by scientific knowledge and farmers' good practices, in local and international languages. Access Agriculture makes these videos easily and sustainably accessible to farmers through large-scale distribution of DVDs via existing rural advisory services, researchers, radio and television stations, project actors, etc. Development agencies and services providers are informed about the existence and the free accessibility of the videos through websites where videos can be downloaded (www.accessagriculture.org) and uploaded (www.agtube.org). This paper presents quantitative and qualitative feedback from the field from Asia and Africa. Multiple studies reveal the impact of the Access Agriculture approach on farmers and NRM stakeholders, whereas continuous monitoring also reveals the usefulness of the websites and hosted videos to university lecturers, researchers, trainers, project managers, and radio and television broadcasters. Lessons learned and insights for future developments are shared to inspire food security and NRM promoters around the world.

Keywords: Access agriculture, natural resources management, training videos, small scale farmers