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“Bridging the gap between increasing knowledge and decreasing resources”

Adoption of Land Management Practices in Ethiopia: Which Network Types Matter Most?

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Abstract

In recent years researchers have begun discussing the impact of social networks on the adoption of sustainable land management practices. However, key research questions such as which types of social networks matter most and how do specific network types matter for adoption is not addressed fully. Using Farmers Innovation Fund data of the World Bank, we fill this research gap by exploring the impacts of three types of social networks (relatives, friendship and neighbourhood) on the adoption of soil conservation and tree planting. Our findings showed that relative networks have a positive impact on planting trees but its impact on soil conservation is negative. This indicates the presence of “egoistic behaviour” even in stronger ties such as relatives. Our conclusion is that farmers tend to plant trees as a means of securing land holdings. However, such “private benefit” incentive may disappear when it comes to soil conservation, which is more of a “social benefit”.

Keywords: Natural resource management, neighbours, networks, relatives, soil conservation, tree planting