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## Information Transfer for Agricultural Innovation: Lessons Learned from an Agricultural Intervention in Teso, Rural Kenya

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### Abstract

Adoption and sustainability of agricultural innovations are highly dependent on information available to farmers; how it is packaged and disseminated to the end users. We have conducted a study evaluating the outcomes of an agriculture intervention related to buffer strips that was implemented within HealthyLAND project for smallholder farmers in Teso, a rural area in Kenya. This contribution presents and discusses main results and the lessons learned relevant for improvement of knowledge transfer.

The aim of the agricultural intervention was to promote dietary diversity through training of smallholder farmers on appropriate kitchen garden practices, specifically introducing vegetables and legumes as buffer strips. This intervention was supplemented by nutrition education aimed at improving diets of young farm families. Both trainings were performed by Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) who were trained by an agriculture expert and agricultural extension officers, yet on the agriculture intervention activities specified by a group of experts. Both qualitative (Focus Group Discussions) and quantitative (household survey) techniques were used to collect data to evaluate the outcomes of the agriculture intervention.

The outcomes of the agricultural intervention related specifically to buffer strips adoption within the HealthyLAND Project in Kenya were not corresponding to the expectations of the project team. Farmers were more likely to adopt the innovation if they felt being well-informed about the context and content. However, often farmers reported not being sufficiently informed about the benefits of the promoted agricultural practice. This could be attributed to the lack of agricultural experience of the CHVs but also how the training was planned and introduced to the farmers.

Thus, successful dissemination of the information is highly dependent on the qualification and experience of the one who transfers the information to the farmers. The way how the information is packaged and transferred is also crucial. The information should be simple to be understood (for farmers and trainers), complete, context specific and focused to attain the intended purpose. Universities need to offer specific training on how scientific knowledge should be better packaged for agriculture extension.

**Keywords:** Adoption of agricultural innovation, agricultural intervention, dietary diversity, information transfer