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for a healthy and sustainable future”

Adoption of Agro-climate Services

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Abstract

Agro-climate services (ACS) play a vital role in supporting agricultural planning and practices in a climate change context. In many developing country settings, however, the effectiveness of ACS is compromised by “last-mile” problems that prevent smallholder farmers from receiving crucial information. To address this gap, CARE in Vietnam, a non-government organisation, has implemented three continuous projects since 2015 to improve the provision of actionable climate-informed agricultural advice to smallholder farmers. In these projects, weather forecasters, agricultural workers and farmer champions co-generate climate-informed agricultural advice. Farmer champions consist of village leaders and women group leaders who then transfer ACS to farmers via two platforms. On one platform, they meet farmers weekly as part of their saving and credit activity. On another platform, they meet farmers on an ad-hoc basis in conventional village meetings.

We sought to support the scaling of ACS by better understanding the factors that make farmers adopt in different platform settings. To do this we developed impact pathways of farmers’ adoption of ACS through focus group discussions. We surveyed 82 randomly selected farmers to validate the impact pathways involved in ACS as well as ACS adoption dynamics. Farmers who met regularly were very likely to access, read, discuss, understand, positively perceive, intend to adopt and adopt ACS. Seventeen percent of these farmers remain to have challenges to understand ACS. In the meanwhile, fifty-one percent of farmers who did not meet regularly in village meetings had difficulties understanding ACS. Personal exchange did not resolve this difficulty but still had positive impacts on the decision to adopt. As a result, adoption rates gradually increased throughout the project, peaking at around 97 % in both farmer platforms after the five-year project intervention. Our results suggest that interpersonal relations play a crucial role in promoting the adoption and peer-to-peer scaling of ACS. For now, the role of the farmer champions is also critical to the success of the intervention. However, if the intervention is to be scaled up, the effort and resources required to engage farmer champions may be a challenge.

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