Farmer to Farmer Learnings
Workshop Summary

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Workshop Objectives

Expected workshop outputs and outcomes:

a) An improved understanding about the underpinning theories, principles and models for effective and sustainable farmer-to-farmer (F2F) learning outcomes;
b) A **set of practical guidelines, recommendations and examples for F2F learning activities** that could be used by field staff and management of AIPD-Rural; and
c) The identification of **two case studies or models of F2F learning** that show the greatest promise in contributing to AIPD-Rural's goals.

Introduction

The aim is to increase income for the poor so fundamentally this requires some change at the farm level. There are two pathways available to do this: better access to inputs and/or knowledge. How do you get more knowledge to farmers? In India 80% of farmers get knowledge from input suppliers and other farmers.

The reality is that in helping the poorer farmers, higher income farmers will also be involved. Often helping the poor is achieved through helping those more able to be helped. Generally increasing wealth may be the best option for improving poor productivity and wealth. By helping those that can be helped you help the poor through employment opportunities.

Session 1 A brief overview of F2F theory, principles and models

Elske van de Fliert

- Development communication is really facilitation of engagement. Consultation with communities was not enough therefore led to more participatory approaches. The various participatory approaches can be separated based on objective.
- Non formal education – education formed by thinking and reflecting and practical learning. Learning and therefore becoming empowered. Involves critical skill development and critical thinking that doesn't necessarily fit into formal education system. Understanding what they know and building on that, enhancing what they need
- Experiential and experimental learning are different e.g. in FFS participants do experiments to learn from the experience. In sustainable development collective action is important.
- Capacity to change – requires many things e.g. access to inputs, access to knowledge.
- Experimentation can be for a new innovation or for adaptation – Elske believes different processes.
- Farmers can be used as an information source but who facilitates? How does a farmer take that leadership role? Participatory research. In basic research farmers maybe

involved in a consultative way in informing agendas. In applied research farmer involvement is in informing agendas and maybe evaluating but still consultative. Farmer involvement is really important in adaptive research.

- Research vs extension: Limit the number of farmers involved in participatory research as it is still a research activity and don't want too many involved that may not have analytical capacity. Participatory research is different from participatory learning
- Facilitating participation: Have to be honest about the agendas we have and what we can achieve. Usually these are set. Need to invest in the time required to learn and unlearn. What should be funded and what not. Sometimes farmers are paid for turning up. In participatory approaches payment to farmers often negates the ownership element.
- Still difficult to institutionalise participatory approaches.
- Circle of learning can happen in communities by itself or made need some participatory research to develop good relationships.

Discussion

- Motivation and why farmers participate was discussed. If farmers are willing to participate is it for themselves or their groups. Many people get rewards from group involvement. Motivation is dependent on an individual's awareness of shortcomings assets and opportunities for learning needs to come first. Also dependent on culture, system.
- It is difficult to assess whether the circle of learning occurs spontaneously as projects finish and no-one is there to monitor. Good examples Elske has seen of spontaneous learning have often had NGO involvement as they tend to be involved over the longer term with a focus on facilitation rather than agenda setting. Some learning groups continue for a while on their own- up to 10 years but then falls apart - often linked to some trigger or someone else in the community takes the lead. Unfortunately there is not sufficient time and funding to follow these properly. Maybe learning doesn't need to continue indefinitely.
- For something to continue it requires thought up front on what is the long term, sustainable, business model that will make this continue. Where will the money come from that will empower these people to keep going?
- Initially need to consider whether the innovations will provide income. In some cases farmers may need some initial steps to be able to access and participate in a business model. Business models continue to develop and require re-developing them every few years. There are different kinds of business models for farming and for extension to provide support to farmers. How do you develop a commercial business model around service delivery to replace telling people what to do? Requires understanding of access.
- The process of scaling up needs to be brought into project early on. This includes involvement of private sector early on so commercial support systems are there for long term sustainability.
- A lot of successful processes have external facilitation. Where do the resources come from for resource hungry processes whether it be knowledge or something else? Use of farmers as facilitators - the frameworks and skill development are really important but that needs to be balanced with the fact that farmers need to be working on their farm too.

- The cost of FFS does mean that the private sector can be a key driver. FFS doesn't have to be so expensive if the principles of FFS are implemented but without the label. The FFS label tends to attract attention that increases the costs e.g. political attention
- There are good examples of the private sector developing a good understanding of facilitating processes and they then use farmer facilitators that have been poached by the private sector. Disappointingly the private sector can undo all the progress in adoption by coming back in with freebies promoting their products e.g. insecticides with free hats and t-shirts.
- F2F learning doesn't have to be all about the FFS approach. Simple practices can be scaled up more easily and cheaply. But need to ensure that farmers are ready for adopting practices – are there initial steps required first?

John Pontius

- 4 major frameworks particularly in relation to F2F.
- Adults have experience. This sets them apart from children and young adults
- Learning cycle is how knowledge is created. Same process for scientific research
- People put limits on themselves. Adult learning is about realisation that they can do something about these limits, get greater control over these areas of their lives.
- Learners vary, some are faster some are slower. Learning in groups has advantages as the learners help each other to learn together. Group atmosphere helps people through all the stages.
- Farmer FFS facilitators were so useful and productive because they went through the FFS first and then farmers set up their own – motivation is key.
- To scale out you need to generate a network of sub-districts and then expand to district level

Discussion

- Discussion centred on the future provision of extension services and whether it would be government, private or self-funded. Private companies have field staff to promote products and the discussion focused on whether there would be a role for private companies to upgrade the role of their field staff to provide more of an extension service.
- Government extension services will become weaker and weaker as there is less money in agriculture. People with technical knowledge are those in the private sector, industry driven so they will be in a better position to provide technical service. Would be preferable to have a more neutral sector providing extension services e.g. for credibility with farmers. The private sector will still have links to product sales the commercial aspect will remain their priority. Don't know that it would be as successful with farmers through the private sector compared with a neutral agent.
- Motivation of farmers was identified as being of key importance and demonstrating what is possible is an effective motivator e.g. if you take a farmer to a successful cocoa farm and say this is what you could do.

Arma Bertuso: Monitoring and evaluation

Discussion

- Facilitators from CHARM program are always someone from the community e.g. farmers who have experience with FFS. Local government units are also part of this program. 3-4 people per FBS.
- Training involves a week long facilitator training. This is not as long as other training programs as trainers with previous FFS facilitator experience are sourced.
- The biggest challenge when implementing the program from beginning to end is separating the emphasis on the technical or the personal aspects. In terms of the FBS, first is the technical aspect and second the participants as have to get the right participants. Selection based on simple farmer information and a pre-test that tests knowledge.
- FBS is very commodity specific.
- Currently the program has completed post evaluations but no impact assessments yet.
- Action plans are included in the FBS program as the aim is to strengthen the enterprise group and role in the market.
- Each village pre-identified commodities. There are 107 villages involved of which 39 are root and tuber crops. Most have already established enterprise groups.
- Cost to run the FBS $100 per session. Reduced cost as use facilitators from within the community and subsidised by community. Travel is generally a constraint e.g. in Sulawesi for cocoa farmers so transport subsidised.

Facilitated Discussion

This facilitated discussion session involved consideration of the following questions:

- What are the broad F2F approaches?
- What are the key ingredients for F2F success?
- What are the key indicators of F2F success?

- **Demonstration** is fundamental. There was significant discussion around the use of demonstration farms and consensus that demo plots/farms are needed to show what is possible/what the opportunities are. However, farmers must be able to take what they have seen and implement on their own farms. Demo plots/farms are passive and merely seeing it is not likely to be enough to stimulate change, other approaches are also needed.
- **Motivations** of farmers were discussed. Demonstration plots could be used to motivate. Other motivators may be social (peer/community), economic, cultural.
- It was highlighted that you need to understand what the grower pain points are for change – root cause analysis. Understanding of the issue as well as the region, community, wealth status, technical needs, time constraints/ risk management plans as this reflects the capacity of farmers to make changes. Examples were made eg not cutting mother trees because had no chainsaw, not adopting because have social conflict with neighbouring village that did adopt.

- The point was made that the learning cycle and the processes comprised in it are a given (and do not change). This learning process is separate to the delivery models and the sustainability of it. Who implements the approaches is another set of models.
- **Sustainability** of the change caused by an intervention was highlighted as a key success indicator.
- There are other options in the private versus public extension debate which is enabling farmers to do this role (ie extension support for other farmers to support ongoing growth of the farming system) as a business. The CVC was raised as a possible example.
- Creating farmer champions is a great opportunity and a challenge as it is a long process to build the requisite skills and knowledge. An example is two farmer researchers selected based on inquisitiveness and different questions. Other farmers started going to them then and they were trained as farmer facilitators. Farmer facilitators need to be paid become change agents but for how long? Could farmer champions be those that turn providing this service into a business opportunity? This highlighted the importance of not just building technical content but also business skills.
- Need to create a safe environment for farmers to share learning and experience e.g. Community of Practice. Farmer champion attends forums and then takes back to the group.
- The innovation needs to be introduced first then later comes the F2F. Innovation may be in the community but no one recognises it and it requires a facilitator to introduce the innovation then later comes the F2F learning.
- Cross visits were raised as another approach. It was highlighted that these work on the small scale but can be limited in the capacity to be scaled out. For Dinas to continue scaling out would be really difficult and also a matter of skill.
- The role of NGO's in facilitating F2F was highlighted as a key point from the presentations as well as the role of local private sector, local farmers as well as larger companies.

Session 2 Case studies of F2F learning

Hussin Purring: Mars Cocoa Development Centre – Farmer capacity building

- Previously Mars worked with 41 groups in 2 years providing seed and other inputs with no success. Mars also participated in a range of FFS with very low adoption rates. Then developed this broader program.
- Cocoa academy: 2.02 hectares just of demonstrations e.g. Plant spacings, new insecticides and 30 ha where undertake research with ACIAR etc. Cocoa academy doesn't actually work with farmers on the ground.
- Training of cocoa doctor: approximately 7 weeks training
- Content: 4 weeks productivity training / 2-3 weeks business / ICS- internal control system 5-6 days. Consults with farmers about how long they can be away at a time
- There is a 2t/ha production minimum to be cocoa doctor
- CDC's comprise 1 coordinator and 3 field staff. Each field personnel deals with 10 CVC's supporting cocoa doctors. All are trained at the cocoa academy so they all have the same training, including partner CDC's and CVC's which provide support (Need partners to scale up). Partners are basically the traders.

- Cocoa academy can train up to 36 (some productivity and business). Not only cocoa doctors and trainers but also young people so currently have 52 students. While being trained they lodge with farmers. Cocoa doctors are all farmers and have trained 96 including partners.
- CDC Mars also support local government extension in capacity.
- Increase from current yield by GAP, plant material and fertiliser. Farmers should know GAP's but need to show them.
- One cocoa doctor was a bus driver, started his own training centre and now farms cocoa.
- Farmers are not contracted to supply Mars.

Sinta Kaniawati: F2F in the soybean sector. The Unilever experience

- The program is very much linked to the business and the commercial arm of Unlilever business as they are investing in their own supply chain. When Unilever purchased Bango brand did not have sufficient black soybean supply to expand nationally. Sustainability is really only considered in terms of economic sustainability not program sustainability as the Unilever Foundation is confident the program will continue to be funded into the future to secure soybean supply.
- Previously black soy beans (specific to Jakarta and Java) were sourced from suppliers but to be sustainable Unilever now need to engage with small farmers.
- Unilever Indonesia Foundation facilitates the program which is mutually beneficial Unilever needs quality, quantity and price and the farmers (including women) are smallholders, particularly landless and the program aims to improve livelihoods. To date the program has reached close to 9000 farmers with a target of 10000 by 2015.
- Unilever is not likely to encourage champion farmers to provide extension services as a business. Currently they only receive payment if they are a guest speaker at other events.
- Gender roles - role of male tends to be heavy work and female lighter work or anything related to financial management, postharvest practices. The one who is trained is the one making the most decisions relating to that crop. Women farmers includes women with their own land and women as part of farming families.
- Most of the margins go to farmers and a proportion to co-operatives. Unilever is not revealing operational costs.
- Collaborative approach benefits government extension as they can see how it is being implemented with farmers, farmer enthusiasm and progress. Collaboration with govt commences prior to planting and they are involved in area workplan. Government provides mostly infrastructure.
- Farmers contracted (standard supplier contract by Unilever purchasing contract) to Unilever but still some side selling, maybe 10-15%.
- Facilitators are with FIELD
- Involving media to promote farmer perspectives.
- Focusing on a behavioural change program in health, hygiene and nutrition as the company provides consumer products

Aris Martanto: FFS in the dairy sector. YSC experience with Danone

- Reinforced consideration of farmer capacity and how they learn.

- Demo plots provide motivation and training involves the knowledge transfer.
- As training is costly champion farmers were used. Champion farmers – trained farmers were obligated under an agreement to train other farmers. Participants received incentives to attend training (a milking bucket if they attended training 10 times). Demonstration farms are used in the training of other farmers.
- During the milk crisis dairy numbers decreased as stock prices went up and stock were sold off but they gave no thought of the future and had to change livelihood.
- Ciater farmers are members of a milk co-operative.

Session 3 Case studies of F2F learning

Adityajaya: FIELD experience in managing FFS

- Discussion centred on the cost effectiveness of the FFS approach. Variability in FFS costs were noted. Often it is relative to what funding is available in the project. The FFS approach provides great benefits up to 10 fold in terms of productivity and livelihood impacts and can be implemented cost effectively at a local level but generally requires more money to scale out. Some benefits are difficult to cost e.g. farmer's recognise the benefit of FFS for its educational value. The economic benefits can be greater than yield if you consider other facto-s e.g. labour, etc.
- Sustainable livelihoods framework is used to have farmer group develop action plan. It is a tool for assessing what the existing situation is in the village and as a tool for analysis. A limitation in the use of this tool is it cannot measure benefits/impacts.
- Farmer's don't usually consider their labour as a cost and don't factor it in.
- FFS has evolved in various directions: for the good and bad. In some cases the principles of FFS had been corrupted. An example was given: a potato ICM FFS that was not implemented properly and should not be considered an FFS process. The model developed for potato ICM FFS with CIP was not followed. Facilitators were not well trained. The ICM FFS should have been implemented with a demo plot on ICM and specific demo plots on each management practice in a separate experiment rather than just the ICM FFS.

Dahlannuddin: F2F in the beef sector, NTT and NTB

- Used a cross visit approach with farmers from new villages visiting a training village. This involved facilitated F2F interaction and undertake a post training evaluation to contrast what they have seen with what they do. This gives them some idea of what they need to do to 'compete' with the training village farmers.
- The use of cross visits in beef is still part of research project assessing the tree systems and management practices, not part of a program for extension.
- F2F learning involves trained farmers do the training but they are facilitated by extension. Trained facilitators are provided through NGO's and government system. The challenge is for the extension person to stay in the background.
- The cross visit approach involved multiple visits. The first involved general topics but at subsequent visits different topics were introduced. Training is based on what the problems are.
- Evaluation assess how many farmers had achieved different practices and steps.
- In terms of adoption so far 50-60 up to 80% making changes.

Session 4 Case studies of F2F learning

Discussion following the presentations in this session was more directed towards F2F learning as a component of a broader program rather than the individual F2F approaches.

Joanne Millar: Improving livestock production in Lao PDR; the role of F2F learning

- Highlighted and measured non-adopters. Understanding non adopters is very important for M&E.
- Evaluation needs to involve reflection with farmers. Evaluation involves active and non-active farmers.
- Champion farmer visits popular with women who might not be able to leave the farm for cultural or child care reasons. But the champion farmer method requires a farmer who can communicate.
- Use a mix of methods as appropriate. In this case cross visit, case studies and champion farmers. Case studies were used to demonstrate impact.
- Pig results for women indicate turnover and also that they required time to build up the confidence to invest in goats.
- Need to understand unexpected outcomes as well as expected and make sure that you capture them. Eg fattening for bull festival rather than for market.

Elske van de Fliert: FFS approach and its evolution in Indonesia

- NGO's adapted FFS to other crops and embedded it in the way they worked with farmers. Very much based on whatever the community needed. Costs to do this were right down as this was just the way they operated. Became farmer to farmer learning in the true sense. Problems in scaling up though as NGO typically based in a community and not their focus to expand to other area.
- Current Indonesian Government FFS program in maize soybean and rice. Not facilitated as F2F learning process as it is based on subsidies and input distribution system with broader production and national goals rather than increased farmer learning and skill development as the key goal.
- Current project Plant Corn Harvest Cattle, is based on principles of FFS but not labelled that as the original concept of FFS has been corrupted somewhat. Farmers have to test practices in their own field and this is a condition of participation as they cannot be involved in system change unless they understand the implications of changing something in their own system. Meetings are rotate to different participant fields. Communities and families are allowed to design components themselves.
- Sustainability does not refer to sustaining field schools as such but having critical mass in a community so that it can continue experimenting and learning. Critical mass within smaller communities that can then be scaled out to adjacent communities.

Discussion

- Much of the discussion was centred on critical mass/tipping points for sustainability of the change itself - how do you know what it is and how do you achieve it? Rather than a number that determines critical mass, there is a requisite understanding of social networks and diffusion, the qualitative aspects of who is participating and how they can help others i.e. initial analysis of stakeholders and what their needs are and who can

become the critical mass. This was linked to sustainability as building critical mass then gives options for developing business models. Presentations and discussion of F2F learning in this context then gives rise to other considerations such as barriers to adoption, alternatives for stimulating change.

- Passive diffusion system doesn't really work. It's about F2F learning, active engagement and passing on skills. Also dependent on the commodity and the social aspect.
- Sustainability in terms of cost of the FBS and at different levels i.e. in the case of FBS at the business level versus the program level.
- Need to build room into a project to take advantage of what has been learnt at different stages of the project

Arma Bertuso: Farmer Business Schools for market chain development

- FBS extended the context of the FFS approach
- Cost of FBS estimated at $100-200 per session for the FBS cycle. Transport built into CHARM allowances.
- In terms of sustainability FBS is focused oat the individual business level rather than the program level and how to make sustainable after the funding ends.
- Opportunity for the private sector to be involved.
- FBS involves 170 villages with 1 commodity per community. At the start of the project villages undertook commodity prioritisation. Buyer is determined through part of the market chain assessment.
- Training of facilitators before FBS. External presenters for special topics.

Session 5 Focussed discussion: Input from individuals in the group

F2F is part of a package of interventions aimed at innovation and practice change for smallholder farmers. The following outlines advice to AIPD-Rural for developing F2F learning approaches from individuals in the group based on their F2F learning experiences in terms of scale, sustainability and impact.

Scale

- What is scalable? Maybe not everything
- Build in the scaling up plan very early in project plan
- Be prepared that as a project is scaled up there may be less impact as the innovation is adapted as it gets further away from innovators
- Combined approaches?

Sustainability

- Want to have an exit strategy
- Development of business models
- Sustainability at different levels i.e. farm and production, program, farmer learning
- Extended funding models for sustainable production investment

Impact

- Identify people who want to be trained, motivation (wealth and alterative livelihoods), key farmers, farmer buy in

- capacity for training and adoption,
- combined approaches much more effective than individual approaches, involve various stakeholders, actors
- Match training to training needs may be different between different participants eg based on gender roles.
- Economic, productivity, income livelihood, networks
- Demonstration plots (what can be achieve) and experience on their own farms
- Provide support once back on their farms
- Monitor and reflect with family/participants

Session 5 Group exercise

In groups, participants were asked to advise AIPD Rural (who require impact, sustainability and scale) based on the following questions (see Table). Those in bold are the principles, approaches and indicators

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Participants	Joanne Millar, Clive Murray, Noel Janetski, Kate Janetski Mardiana Etrawaty, Aris Martanto	Elske van de Fliert, Sinta Kaniawati, Teddy Kristedy, Aditiajaya	John Pontius, Dahlannudin, Edwin Saragih, Suharman, Arma Bertuso, Hussin Purung
What are 3 key principles necessary in a successful F2F program?	• **Mutual, tangible benefits to all - business case (know before)** • **Seeing is believing** • **Tailoring to people's roles** • Know farmer situation (support from Local Govt) • Facilitate farmer independence • Work with motivated farmers • Stakeholder involvement • Use experiential/action learning • Capacity building/mentoring field staff •	• **Approaches need to be system and region specific – socioeconomic, agroecological and cultural aspects** • **Engage adequate number of facilitators that have skills to facilitate F2F learning and adequate technical knowledge hence invest in capacity building** • **Ensure sustainable benefits with clear KPI (esp. financial)** • Work with existing groups • Maintain dynamics of farmers • Engagement with local experts • Stakeholder analysis • New perspective of adult learning	• **Active and interactive learning building on farmers needs** • **Selection/collaboration of key stakeholders** • **Technology strategies i.e. innovations contributing to AIPD-Rural's goals** • Structured program (simple to complex, based on farmer's needs) • Farmers as facilitators i.e. champions
What F2F approaches/activities	• **Meeting regularly** • **Demos (WOW!)/field trips to successful farms**	• **Training of facilitators** • **Cross visits to demonstrate good practice**	• **Seeing is believing in their field** • **Supported by each other - synergy**

would be in your F2F toolbox?	• **Mix workshops and field activities** • **FBS approaches i.e. business orientated but general FG for power?** • ToT Farmers (sharing knowledge) • Simulation games • 'How to' guide for facilitators • Join or form sector/industry forum	• **Training designed based on FFS principles** • Demo plots • Combine classroom and field • Embedded communication modules • Capacity building to farmer organisation • Sharing sessions	• **Transfer Communication – (knowledge, technology), capacity of farmer's to be communicators, field schools**
What are 3 SMART indicators of success for a F2F program?	• **Net income creation** • **Return on investment + add ons and spin offs** • Number of farmers • Plan to withdraw • Productivity data (yields, survival, etc.) • Livelihood data (household goods, labour, education)	• **Increased return on investment** • **Enhanced decision making capacity** • **Annual increase in number of farmers benefitting** • Ecology benefits (soil, climate	• **Increase in productivity/income/other indicators e.g. volume of seeds** • **Adoption/adaptation rate i.e. numbers of farmers participating** • **Use of benefits derived from the project e.g. income used for education**
What are your 3 main recommendations for a successful F2F program	• **Do stakeholder analysis first. Root cause analysis. (region, crop, gender, business needs, motivations)** • **Tailor best practice/innovation to each situation using stakeholder forum/discussions** • **Understand and involve end users markets** • Make sure women's activities are included • Follow up and mentoring farmer's	• **As above**	• **Well-designed demonstration plots (active learning)** • **Involvement/training of different stakeholders (private, researchers, academics, traders, buyers)** • **Key farmer's capacity building** • Youth (formal education) • Follow up, post-training assistance

Summary of recommendations for F2F learning

Key Principles for successful F2F programs:

Related to Program Design:

- Make sufficient effort to know the specific needs and wants of your target group by location and sector before identifying the changes or innovations to be promoted.
- Understand early who the stakeholders are in connection with delivering this change or innovation, and understand their incentives for delivering these changes.

Related to implementation:

- Engage early with commercial players that can facilitate an elegant exit strategy.
- Monitor changes in farm behaviour to detect early signs that your change hypothesis is valid.

Related to Scale:

- Build-in a concept to reach scale in the early stages of implementation; this may involve training key farmers, small commercial entrepreneurs or other agents of scale and replication.
- Keep funding you scale-strategy until the program reaches a critical mass. A critical mass is reached when the innovation has taken root and is spreading without program inputs.

Key Elements of Successful Approaches:

- "Seeing is believing", this means demo plots and exchange visits are critical to success.
- You need to work with groups over a protracted period of time to affect the change process.
- Linking the farmers with market players (users/buyers) is critical to sustainability.
- The demo plots of commercial players should be incorporated into your own demo plot program.

Key Indicators to Monitor:

- Net attributable income changes or farmers
- Yield or productivity changes of farmers
- The sustainability of the change as the project nears completion and inputs have ceased
- The number of other providers supplying the innovation to your target group
- The Value for Money of ROI on the intervention cost of intervention/aggregated net attributable income changes