Farmer-to-Farmer Extension: Back to the future

MEAS Symposium --
Evidence for the Field
Washington D.C.
5-7 June 2013

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Issues Covered

- F2F Concept & Study Objectives
- Clientele Being Served
- Technologies Practiced
- Financing
- Sustainability
- Scaling-up
- Limitations

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Introduction

- Farmer to farmer extension (FFE): the provision of training by farmers, to farmers, often through the creation of a structure of farmer-trainers (Scarborough et al. 1997).
- Flurry of articles about FFE in late 1990s, but interest, in the literature, died out
- Meanwhile, interest in the field flourished! A 2012 study of 37 extension providers in Malawi found that 78% use it.
- Practice varies in objectives, selection criteria, and incentives.
- We were unable to find a single study comparing approaches used and documenting lessons learned.

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Study Objectives

Assess farmer-to-farmer extension approaches in Cameroon, Kenya and Malawi to determine best-fit practices. We

- assess the experience of different types of extension services in using Lead Farmers What lessons have they learned?
- determine the perspective of the Lead Farmers: their motivations, achievements, challenges, opportunities

We are collecting data -- results not yet out.

Findings here are from the first 30 interviews and from ICRAF's research on FFE in East Africa.

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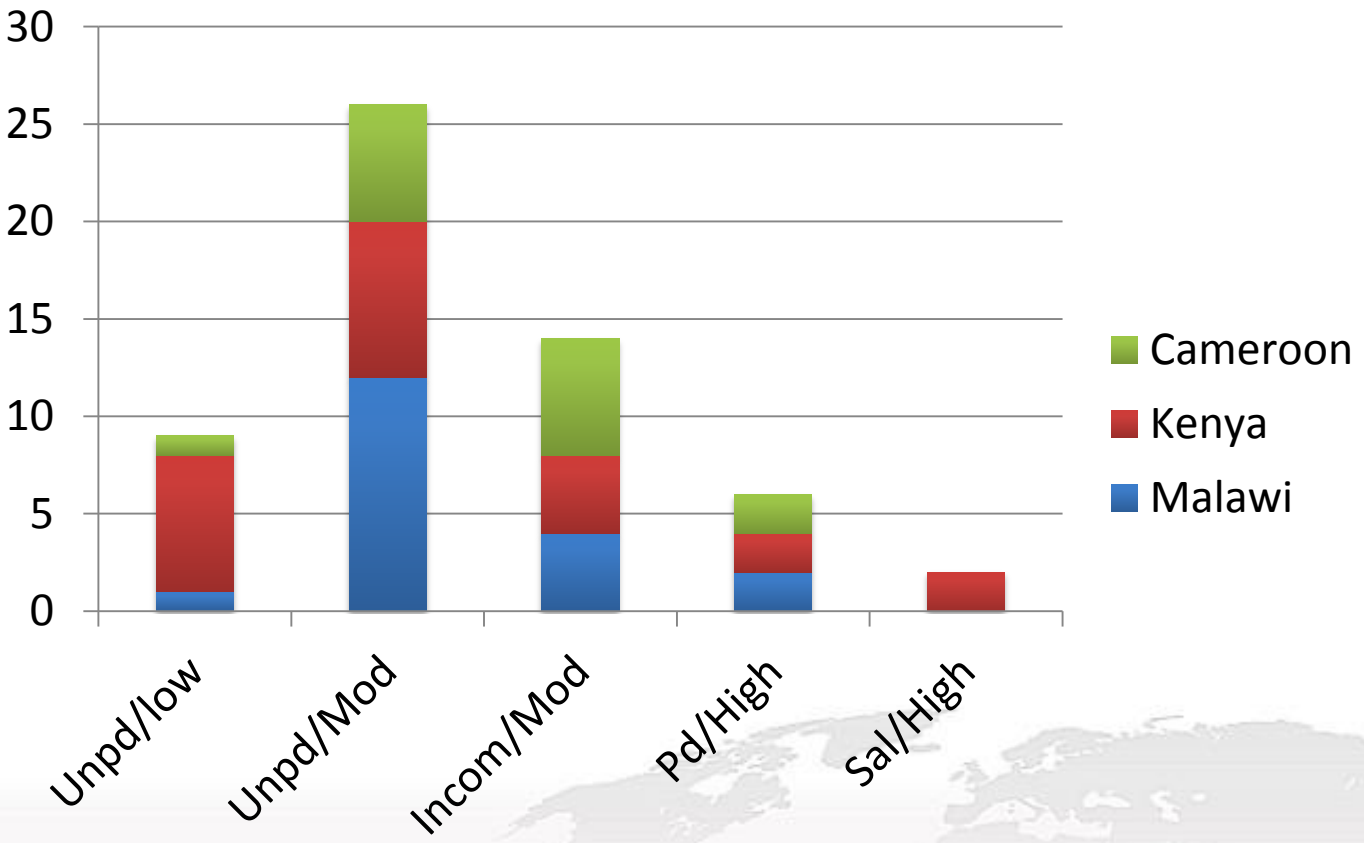
What Clientele is Served and How?

A range of types of Lead Farmer approaches are being used



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What Clientele is Served and How?

- Approach is well suited to smallholder farmers as they learn best from peers (Feder and Savastano, 2006)
- Approach particularly well-suited to women, as it is possible to recruit high percentages of women as lead farmers.

  For example, in the East African Dairy Development Project, Kenya, less than 10% of extension staff are women while 38% of 1,473 farmer trainers were women.

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What Kind of Technologies are Being Adopted?

- Lead Farmers are promoting a broad range of crop, livestock and agroforestry practices.
- Practices should probably be fairly simple and low risk (that is, the cost of error should be low).

  e.g., practices that involve use of agro-chemicals for crop protection or livestock health should be avoided.
- Lukuyu et al (2012) reported that farmers trained by farmer trainers scored their performance on crops higher than on livestock, mainly because livestock health and breeding are complex.

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How is the Model Being Financed?

- Most organizations using FFE cited its low cost and the ability to reach more farmers as the main reasons for using it.

  The organizations employ few field staff, and rely primarily on Lead Farmers to reach their target groups.

- In the East African Dairy Development (EADD) Project in Kenya, costs were about $100/trainer/year, most of which was for a 2-day residential training course.

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How can the Model be Sustained?

	For becoming a trainer		For remaining a trainer	
Motivations	**% mentioned**	**Mean score (1-5)**	**% mentioned**	**Mean score (1-5)**
Gain knowledge	93	2.6	87	2.5
Altruism	85	2.4	81	2.5
Social status and networking	76	2.2	73	2.2
Project benefits	71	2.2	72	2.2
Income from extension activities	64	2.0	88	2.5
Meet demand for training	0	--	81	2.4

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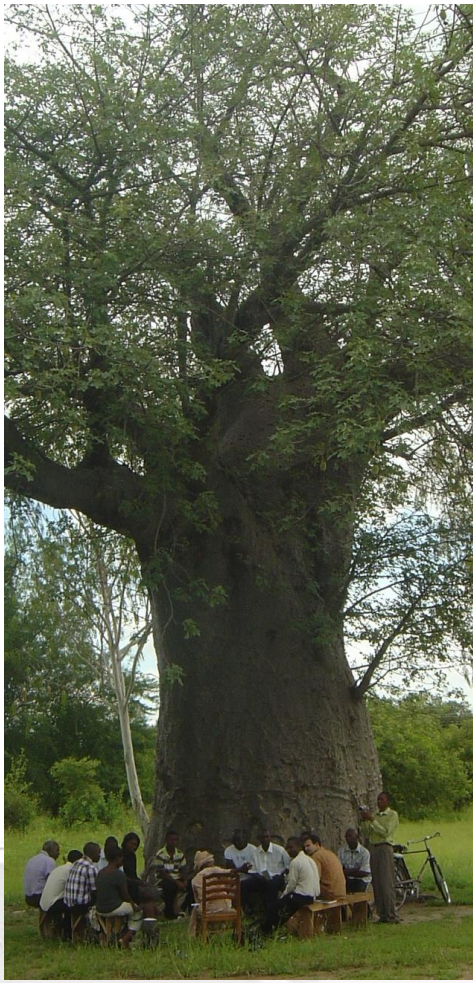
How can the Model be Sustained? (cont.)

- Farmers were motivated to train their peers even without receiving any allowances.
- Three years after the start of EADD, over half of farmer trainers were receiving cash from their extension activities, e.g.,
  - selling seed from crops in their demo plots
  - selling services (making silage, baling hay) that they were promoting.
- Three years after an agroforestry project in western Kenya ended, surveys found that farmer trainers were still actively training farmers (Lukuyu et al, 2012).



How can the Model be Scaled up?

What needs to be scaled up are:

- Best-fit practices, low cost ways of motivating trainers e.g.,
  - contests,
  - certificates,
  - hats/T-shirts,
  - training, e.g, training materials & exchange visits
- Extension service exchanges. For example, those national programs not using it could learn from those that do (eg MOA, Malawi)
- Avoid cash payments/allowances as they are are unsustainable not necessary and de-motivate those not receiving them

- Extension training materials,
- Curriculum reform in training institutions
- Policy makers workshops

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Short-coming and Limitations

- Not suited for complex, high risk technologies.
- Not suited to areas of low population density, unless transportation is provided
- Care must be taken that extension staff do not view lead farmers as a threat
- Lead Farmers need to be linked to extension staff for periodic training and for responding to problems

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Take home messages

- Farmer to farmer extension an effective and sustainable approach in many (not all!) contexts
- Lead farmers' motivations are mainly early access to information, social status and networking, altruism and increasingly income from extension related activities.
- Salaries/stipends not needed.
- Low cost methods needed for
  - strengthening these motivations
  - Strengthening links between lead farmers and formal extension services