



# Exploring Intra-Household Decision-Making and Best Practice Adoption Outcomes of Women-Targeted Extension via Video in Ethiopia

## Introduction

Digital Green's Digital Agricultural Advisory Services (DAAS) implements activities to strengthen the use of digital extension advisory support to farmers in Ethiopia. DAAS also supports the Ministry to directly provide advisory services to Ethiopian farmers through various digital methods, including video-mediated extension services. Laterite is conducting a study on behalf of Digital Green which compares outcomes of DAAS video-mediated extension when delivered to **women-only** farmer groups compared to **mixed-sex** groups. The study focuses on the wheat value chain. In December 2021, we conducted Phase 1 of the study which included qualitative work and video-observation sessions aimed at understanding the perceptions of women and men to the video-mediated approach and on the women-only groups. Phase 2 of the study is ongoing and explores key outcomes for women who attended training, including intra-household decision-making, and knowledge and adoption of best practices.

## Research methods

- This qualitative study focused on smallholder. The study includes two phases: Phase 1 includes video observation sessions and qualitative study; Phase 2 includes two rounds of quantitative household surveys.
- Phase 1 was conducted in 7 kebeles of Tijo Diga woreda, Oromia region. It included 14 observations of video-mediated extensions sessions (7 mixed-sex and 7 women-only), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with 55 women and 32 men and 7 key informant interviews (KIIs) with development agents.
- Phase 2 is ongoing and includes two rounds of quantitative household surveys with 900 households.

## Key Findings

**Note:** these findings pertain only to Phase 1 of the study which included FGDs, KIIs, and Video Observation Sessions.

### 1. Video-mediated Extension preferred by DAs and farmers:

- **Development agents (DAs) preferred video demonstrations** to in-person demonstrations. They found video demonstrations efficient, clear, and engaging as a training method.
- **Farmers also prefer video demonstrations**, which they found more interesting, efficient, and easier to engage with than in-person sessions.

### 2. Having highly localized content and local actors was seen as very important:

- Both DAs and farmers agreed that the highly localized content was important.

*"We felt very happy when we saw farmers from our locality on the video,"* – Female participant

*"The video is better because it is not something prepared by people from abroad or a far place. Rather it helps us learn something helpful from the people we know in person."* – Participant, mixed-sex FGD

- **Women greatly appreciated the gender-sensitive content in the videos**, and presence of women in the video who they saw as role models to follow. Some men, however, felt that the portrayal of gender roles in the videos did not accurately reflect reality.

### 3. Farmers greatly appreciated the discussions before, during, and after the videos, and saw this as an opportunity to ask questions and get clarification on what was shown in the video:

- **Both women and men were grateful for the discussion moments**, as they helped deepen their understanding of the video and clear their doubts

*“Making a pause is good: the DA pauses the video to see if the attendees are really following the education of the video attentively.”* – Participant, mixed-sex FGD

#### 4. Several barriers still exist for women’s attendance and participation in video-mediated extension programs:

- **Culturally, men are assumed to be the farmers in the household** and encouraged to attend training. This cultural perception negatively influences women’s participation.
- **Women participated less in the discussions when in the presence of men.** The introduction of women-only groups has been very well received by women. Participants mentioned it would be best if women-only groups were also led by a woman DA, to overcome cultural barriers that hinder discussion in men-led sessions.
- **Some DAs hypothesized that women have less available time** to dedicate to farming training, as they are additionally responsible for household tasks
- Farmers report that DAs do not allocate the same amount of time to the **recruitment of women** as they do for the recruitment of men.

#### 5. Video sessions were affected by challenges related to infrastructure and the environment

Some of the challenges related to video-mediated extension services include:

- **Unfavorable environment.** Displaying the video requires a dim, indoor location, which may be far from either farmers or DAs, or not accessible when needed.
- **Faulty projectors.** Some DAs noted that projectors were not always working properly.
- **Lack of power supply.** Some DAs noted a lack of electricity or batteries needed to operate the projector.
- **Lack of knowledge.** Some DAs mentioned they didn’t have much experience with the projectors, or forgot the training on using the projector, so they struggled to operate them
- **Lack of DG technical support.** Some DAs complained that little help was provided by DG in terms of technical maintenance.

#### 6. Farmers face numerous challenges in adopting best practices (BPs) in wheat farming:

DAs noted that farmers face numerous challenges when adopting BPs in wheat farming. These include:

- Difficulty in row planting and compost application
- Not enough urea fertilizer
- Planting technology (broad bed maker) expensive to access
- Poor watershed practices
- Lack of PICS (Purdue Improved Crop Storage) bags used for grain storage

## Conclusions and recommendations

Farmers and DAs made numerous suggestions to improve the video-mediated training, including the following:

- **Timing of training. To suit when most farmers are able to attend.** The sessions should also be continuous and not occasional. Farmers would also appreciate if they could be notified in advance about the training.
- **Improve the quality of screen and audio. In addition, target more people for the sessions.** Further, the video content should include all members of a household involved in an activity.
- **Include more topics.** Most farmers recommended including more topics in the videos, including pesticides control and land preparation.
- **Include more women and women DAs.** Women recommended to include more women in the video, possibly from their kebele. They also recommend having a woman DA participating in the production of the video and ensuring female DAs lead trainings for women-only groups.
- **Provide additional materials.** Some farmers suggested to have brochures to facilitate the learning process.

## Organizations Involved

**Laterite** is a data, research and analytics firm dedicated to providing high-quality research services for social impact in East Africa. Laterite provides technical advice on the design and implementation of research projects, development interventions, and socio-economic policies. Laterite is a learning partner on the IGNITE project.

**Tanager**, an ACDI/VOCA affiliate, is an international non-profit that brings people together at the table, on the ground, and across supply chains to co-create economic and social opportunities that change lives. Tanager is the lead partner on the IGNITE project.

**Digital Green** is a global development organization that empowers smallholder farmers to lift themselves out of poverty by harnessing the collective power of technology and grassroots-level partnerships.