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Participatory video as a means of capturing community perspectives on rainwater management

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Session: Learning to Innovate



FANTALLE WOREDA, EAST SHOA, OROMIYA REGION, ETHIOPIA. KARRAYYU OROMO PASTORALISTS LEARN PARTICIPATORY VIDEO TECHNIQUES TO DOCUMENT ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES (PHOTO BY BETH CULLEN, MAY 2009)

Key Message

Participatory video (PV), through which local communities plan and shoot video accounts of issues that are important to them, has potential for bringing local perspectives on rainwater management issues to the attention of decision makers thereby fostering rural change.

Summary

Power imbalance between farming communities and decision makers is often a key issue in the process of fostering change in rural systems. Rainwater management interventions in Ethiopia have historically been top-down without due regard to the needs, aspirations, constraints and livelihood realities faced by farming communities. Participatory video (PV) has been used in a range of contexts to give voice to local communities. The passing of the camera to community members can yield positive dividends through development of a community driven product - the finished film. However, the process itself can also empower communities and act as a catalyst for change at local level. In the NBDC projects we are using PV to capture baseline perspectives of local communities on the key challenges to rainwater management. We aim to follow up with further PV exercises as the project progresses as a way of connecting local communities to local innovation platforms. We anticipate that the use of film will bring additional energy to such platforms and help to redress power imbalances between communities and decision makers at local level. In this session we will share our initial work with participatory video to capture local perspectives on rainwater management issues and discuss how this tool could be used in the future as a monitoring and learning tool, as well as for stimulating discussion between stakeholders at various levels, and potentially across CPWF basins.