

livestock Xchange

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Livestock capacity development approaches: IPMS project experiences

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The 'Improving the Productivity and Market Success of Ethiopian farmers' (IPMS) project was established in 2004 to help improve agricultural productivity and production in the country through market-oriented agricultural development.

'Capacity to innovate' by value chain actors was identified as a key factor for a participatory smallholder market oriented agricultural development, thus IPMS focused on strengthening the innovation capacities of farmers, pastoralists, community-based and private sector organizations, and agriculture and natural resource management public organizations, through technical and entrepreneurial skills development and facilitating linkages between relevant actors.

IPMS approaches to capacity development

To understand IPMS capacity development efforts, it is good to examine some of differences between our approaches and 'traditional' ILRI approaches to capacity development. While in the past (when IPMS started),



ILRI had its own special funds for capacity development, in IPMS, capacity development funds were built into the overall program. Further, decisions on the use of ILRI funds were ILRI's, while the use of the IPMS funds was decided by the project partners.

Due to these funding and partnership designs, the focus of IPMS capacity development differed from the existing ILRI focus. This brief summarizes new directions and lessons learned from two types of capacity

development that ILRI and IPMS practice: i) formal training and ii) in service training¹.

Formal capacity development

Support for formal training in ILRI is usually in the form of financial and/or supervisory support for thesis research by ILRI staff, mostly for highly quality students engaged in PhD research. In IPMS, support for formal training came in the form of financial and/or supervisory support for BSc/MSc tuition and thesis research. Such support was mainly provided to public sector staff employed by the Ministry of Agriculture at District, Zone, Region and Federal levels. The main aim of such capacity development was to improve advisory capacities of the Ministry to deal with and adopt more market-oriented development approaches in its work. Candidates for such support were mostly selected by our public sector project partners, with the project itself providing guidance/direction on the subjects relevant for market oriented development, and gender balance. Minimum academic quality standards for admittance were set by local universities and adhered to by project partners and IPMS. The IPMS project also used part of its capacity development funds to support thesis research by its staff/students. For this category, IPMS staff decided on the selection of students and the level of academic qualifications.

Like ILRI's formal capacity development program, IPMS also linked thesis research to the needs of its clients². This had a significant impact on the type of thesis research conducted. While ILRI's research is mostly targeting the scientific community, IPMS-sponsored research is location-specific in support of value chain development.

To make better use of the research findings, IPMS students were encouraged to present their findings in project organized seminars in the Districts. Some also presented at workshops and conferences. IPMS staff helped publish some theses in IPMS working papers and as articles in national and international journals, and some in book format.

1. A third form of short term attachment was not practiced by IPMS and is therefore not commented upon here.

2. This model of linking MSc thesis research to development was common at the time of the Land Grant Colleges models developed with support of American Universities. This approach is now less common and thesis research is more aimed at developing capacity in analytical skills rather than contributing to research questions.



What lessons did we learn and what could be done better with the IPMS type of formal capacity development support?

- Linking capacity development to development resulted in a significant contribution to the development of staff members, also to the generation of knowledge for development (see results of tracer study conducted by IPMS project).
- The main partner in the project, i.e. the Ministry of Agriculture, appreciated the formal capacity building component of project as one of its most successful interventions. The long term effects of such capacity building are expected to contribute to the development of the public as well as the NGO sector.
- It is obvious that the demand on IPMS staff time to support thesis research is higher when levels of academic entrance qualification are low. It is important to have control over the student selection where answers to research questions require a high standard of scientific rigor.
- While research was generally demand-, and not student-driven, most research was answering site-specific questions. The quality and relevance of such research could benefit from multi location research using common research questions and a uniform research framework. IPMS did some of such research at a later stage.

In- service capacity development

In the past, ILRI conducted many practical training courses, mostly on dairy and fodder technology, us-

ing its own premises and facilities. Most of this type of training has now been taken over by national educational institutions, including EMDTI and Agricultural TVETs in Ethiopia.

In IPMS, in-service capacity development based on the needs of the partner institutions was an integral part of the program. Initially, we focused on in-service 'training of trainers' (TOT) of direct project partner institutions, using project funds. Such training aimed to develop 'soft' skills required for participatory market oriented small holder agriculture including participatory extension, market orientated extension, market assessment, gender and HIV/AIDS mainstreaming, environmental assessment, GIS, IT, knowledge management and result based monitoring and evaluation. Research partners were further supported with a course on 'innovation system concepts in agricultural research for development.' IPMS also developed training materials for most of these courses, which have also been shared outside the country.

Besides the development of soft skills for service providers, the project also developed technical skills for the different commodities on which it worked. This capacity development was mostly conducted by specialized partner institutions or IPMS field staff, depending on their own specialty. ILRI/IPMS senior staff contributed to livestock in-service training on more advanced biotechnology technologies for selected federal and regional level research and development staff.

The IPMS project emphasis is now on scaling out its knowledge on approaches and interventions, using various approaches, including in-service capacity development of TOT. On the advice of the partners this strategy is implemented within relevant federal/regional government programs. Most of these programs have their own source of funding and the ILRI/IPMS role is limited to providing resource persons.

What have we learned and what can be done better with this IPMS type of in-service training model?

- The need for in-service training is obvious, especially in subjects not normally included in the formal training of staff.

- In-service training requires follow up to deal with evolving/emerging knowledge and skills needs. Development of action plans may help to plan such follow up. Several approaches may be used for follow up action including field days, meetings, workshops, study tours.
- In-service training provided by a project like IPMS can be expensive as compared to government provided in-service training. As much as possible, such training should therefore be integrated in the government's regular program. IPMS used this model in its later stages, by providing capacity development funds to the partners. The same model was used for capacity building for scaling out.
- While specialized expertise on livestock may be provided by project staff in the short run, the educational system in the country should ultimately be equipped to build capacity in such fields.

Lessons for ILRI

ILRI's livestock capacity development strategy should take account of the changing environment in which we operate today. ILRI can respond to demands from partners by getting involved in carefully selected development projects and integrating capacity development in these projects. Such involvement should result in the synthesis and/or development of training materials and creation of linkages with key educational institutions which can include such materials in their teaching.

On 9 and 10 November 2011, the ILRI Board of Trustees hosted a 2-day 'liveSTOCK Exchange' to discuss and reflect on livestock research for development.

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