

Report of the second Ilu-Sanbitu kebele operational innovation platform meeting, 15 March 2015

Endeshaw Tadesse, Zelalem Lema, Addisu Asfaw and Ahmed Aliyi



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Through action research and development partnerships, Africa RISING will create opportunities for smallholder farm households to move out of hunger and poverty through sustainably intensified farming systems that improve food, nutrition, and income security, particularly for women and children, and conserve or enhance the natural resource base.

The three projects are led by the International Livestock Research Institute (in the Ethiopian Highlands) and the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (in West Africa and East and Southern Africa). The International Food Policy Research Institute leads an associated project on monitoring, evaluation, and impact assessment.



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Contents

Introduction	1
Meeting report.....	2
Agenda	3
Issues covered.....	4
General discussion	8
Ilu-Sanbitu kebele representatives to Sinana woreda IP.....	9
Ways forward by Addisu Asfaw	10
Participants	10

Introduction

Africa RISING in Ethiopian highlands is a research for development project that focus on system interventions in the crop-and-livestock mixed farming system in four big regions (Amhara, Oromia, Tigray and SNNPR). The project understands the need for engaging various research and development partners in addressing system interventions. For this the project established and support innovation platforms at field sites for cooperation and co-learning. The platforms are supported to facilitate meaningful and effective interactions that prioritize, guide, and evaluate the various research and development processes specific to the sites. The platforms started helping connect farmers to profitable and efficient value chains for the main commodities. The members of the platforms are contributing in designing, implementing, evaluating project activities and disseminate and communicate research findings through regular meetings and farmers field days.

Innovation platforms and farmer research groups

Innovation platforms (IPs) have been formed at all the research sites. The platforms aim to nurture linkages among farming communities, the Africa RISING research teams and other public and private actors working in the areas. They work at three levels:

1. At woreda (district) level, strategic IPs support kebele platforms and farmer research groups. They bring together stakeholders to support wider adoption of innovations.
2. At kebele level, operational platforms oversee local research activities, foster integration among the farmer research groups, and promote alignment of local on-farm research with district priorities.
3. Farmer research groups are like innovation clusters. They involve all farmers who are active around specific clusters of research activities – such as forage production, water delivery or varietal improvement. The roles of these groups are expected to expand to promote scaling of innovation to wider groups of farmers.

Regular IP meetings are held at strategic and operational level for sharing and communicating research findings. This report aims to share one of the Operational IP meetings that were organized in one of the project research site called Ilu-sanbitu kebele of Sinana woreda, Oromia region.

Ilu-sanbitu kebele Second operational IP meeting was held on 15 March 2015. The focus of the meeting was to share the findings of the action research carried out in both kebeles at Sinana by Africa RISING project and its partners in 2014 to local partners for potential scaling up.

Meeting report

Venue: Ilu-Sanbitu Secondary School

Participants from Sinana woreda strategic innovation platform/ TG members:

1. Addisu Asfaw – Africa RISING Site coordinator ,
2. Endeshaw Tadesse – Africa RISING Ass Site Coordinator
3. Shure Soboka and Bekele Diriba from Sinana Agricultural Research Centre,
4. Tesfaye Bekele from local NGO (HUNDEE-Regional coordinator),
5. Debele Abebe – Agriocultural Growth Program Focal Person)
6. Ahmed Aliye (Facilitator from Madawalabu University)
7. Zelalam Lema (ILRI)

Ilu-Sanbitu kebele IP members represent the following

- Kebele administration office
- Kebele office of agriculture
- Women representatives from women association and affair office
- Kebele technical group (TG) and FRG representatives farmers almost from all research protocols
- See table _list of participants and their role

Facilitator: Ahmed Aliyi (Madawalabu University)

Presentation by: Addisu Asfaw, Endeshaw Tadesse, Zelalem Lema

Organizer: Kebele TG and IP members

Duration: 10:45am - End time 7:30

Agenda

- Welcome and introduction
- Briefing on FRG, kebele and woreda innovation platform concept and function
- Communicating research findings of Selka and Ilu-sanbitu kebeles
- Opportunity and Challenges
- Way forward
- Finally Selection of 5 FRG representative farmers

Welcomes and introduction

Welcome and introduction of the Agenda was made by Ahmed Aliyi (Facilitator). He invited elders, as Oromo traditional practice, to open the meeting by pray. Three elders represented as an IP members that includes both Muslim and Christian religious leaders prayed and blessed the meeting one after the other.

Ahmed also invited all participants to introduce themselves. He mentions that farmers representing FRGs should tell their name, the local name of their group (i.e. research protocol) and their role while introducing themselves.

Purpose of the meeting

To communicate research results that was conducted on farmers plot in order to make the farmers aware of what they selected during the mid and end season evaluation and yield result. This is important to them because it made them earlier informed to which technology they plan to participate in the coming cropping season. In addition to this, to strength the FRG representative as they are becoming the member of kebele operational IP and make the door open for internal information flow among and within the farmers and TG for building better and strong bond.

Issues covered

Introduction of innovation platform concept

Farmers from each protocol, FRG representatives were briefed with the concept, importance and flow of operational IP and how they become a member of kebele operational IP to work with by representing the rest farmers on each protocol by Zelalem Lema.

-On the way how they form cluster to make a chain from down to up in such a way to strength information flow and cause good achievement than ever.

Communicating research findings of last year activities

Endeshaw presented the trial result that was conducted on different research protocol in comparison to farmers mid, end –season evaluation and yield data. This is just to make clear cut information on different activities that was conducted by Africa RISING and making aware of farmers how well managed plot can give good crop yield, which technology is well suitable to their practical environment. This intern give them insight to which technology they categorize them self for the coming season for better achievement. The farmers in turn highly appreciated the result and show more interest to work with this project in the future.

In line with this, detail discussion was made on the good opportunity and challenges that was encountered during implementation. The farmers said that most of the challenge emerges from themselves falling to manage their trials or carelessly manage it or some of them expect that it is not their own; it is Africa RISING project mandate to do all and doesn't concern them which were wrong assumption. In the future the farmers promise to adjust these misunderstanding and agreed to work hard for the success of the research activities.

Table 1: Ilu-Sanbitu Field crop trials and their Yield results

Type of crop	Varieties	Mid-season evaluation result	End season evaluation	Yield/ha	Rank based on yield
Wheat	Hidase	2		45	1
	Honkolo	3		40	2
	Bika	1		38	3
Food Barley	EH1307	2		38	2
	Dafo	4		30	3
	Abdane	1		33	1
	Harbu	3		29	4
Malt Barley	Bahati	2		31	2
	Miscal21	3		28.5	4
	Bokoji	1		31.5	1
	Holkar	3		30	3
Faba Bean	Moti	2		41	4
	Tumsa	2		65	1
	Dosha	3		60	2
	Gebelcho	1		51	3
Potato	Belete	1	1	374	1
	Gudane	2	3	328	2
	Jalane	3	2	185	3

Table 2: Selka Field crop trials and their Yield results

Type of crop	Varieties	Mid-season evaluation result	End season evaluation	Yield /ha	Rank based on yield
Wheat	Hidase	1		62	1
	Honkolo			36	3
	Bika			39	2
	Mandoyu	2			
	Sanate	2			
Food Barley	Abdane	1		67	1
	Dafo	2		62	2
	EH1493	3		67	1
	Harbu	4		59	3
Malt Barley	Traviller	4		58	3
	Bokoji	3		59	2
	Miscal-21	2		58	3
	Bahati	1		65	1
Faba Bean	Moti	2		47.5	4
	Tumsa	3		59	2
	Dosha	3		61	1
	Gebelcho	1		56.5	3
Potato	Belete	1	1	455	1
	Gudane	2	3	377	2
	Jalane	3	2	305.5	3

Challenges and opportunities

Endeshaw presented the challenges and opportunities identified from last year research activities.

Challenges	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Farmers provide inappropriate land - Poor management by some farmers - Trial harvesting prior to researcher discussion/communication - Less participation on training and field day - Emotional participation beyond their capacity in protocol hosting(some farmers)- on community consultation meeting - Human pest on pulse trials on small plot - Due to mechanization, difficult to implement trial on farmers field - Failure in DLS constriction on the time line 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Farmers interest in protocol implementation - Strong partners collaboration - Production diversification - Planned research activities fully implemented - Farmers become owner of improved seed and seed store. - Favorable environment for growing the crop

Cost benefit analysis of wheat versus potato production

Addisu Asfaw presented simple cost-benefit analysis result of producing wheat against potato. In his presentation, he was interested in the results and income gained by the farmers from the potato production. He tried to estimate potato and wheat production costs and yields gained from last year production using the same size of land (2000m²). Farmers agreed on the unit cost of seed, fertilizers, agrochemicals, labor and others and also the unit farm gate selling price of wheat grains and potato tuber yields. The net profit obtained from potato production is by far greater (more than threefold) than that of wheat. See the table below that shows the cost and benefits of potato versus wheat production:

S/ N	Crop Type & variety	Gross income (ETB)	Production costs (ETB)	Net profit (ETB/2000m ²)	Net profit (ETB/ha)
1	Wheat - <i>Hidase</i>	6,750	1,480	5,270	26,350
2	Potato - <i>Gudane</i>	26,250	5,946	20,304	101,520

In addition to the income, Addisu also presented the benefits of potato production for Bale farmers, who are known by mono-cropping (wheat production area) for soil fertility, reducing weed infestation, minimize wheat rust, improve nutritional values and also market access. Based on this, he also tried to advise them that rotating wheat with crops like legumes, potato, barley and others can improve soil fertility, crops yield, nutrition and income.

General discussion

- Three people were selected to lead the discussion process (i.e. Kelil H/Ahmed kebele chairman and kebele IP chairman, Debele Abebe woreda AGP focal person and IP TG, Bekele Diriba Extension- SARC and IP TG and gender champions). Discussion highlight and direction was given from the chairman and farmers start to react accordingly.
- Ahmed H/Hussen (Farmer)-Apple FRG- We, farmers have a problem on managing our farm and trials plot. We only remember our trials when we see AR team coming to our trial plot otherwise can't manage on time. I know Africa RISING is providing us with a lot of benefit like seed store, high value crops and knowledge which last with us forever and change our livelihood. But we are not utilizing it properly and this is totally our problems not Africa RISING team to be criticized. So, we take this as a lesson to learn from and do our best in the next season.
- The kebele TG and FRG representative with operational IP members have to do more closely and strongly to provide solution to such like problems.
- Mohammed Amano (DA) - Our kebele has got really a great opportunity to be part of this project site and is golden chance to our farmers for being the direct beneficiary of the research out put under this project. Thus, we are expected to work hard more than ever we do being solution provider not problem creator as this project work for us.
- We also ask Africa RISING team if you use photo/video report to communicate to our farmers to attract attention more.
- Esmael Abubeker (Farmer) - Make sure that, all FRGs members know themselves and their representative to function effectively.
- Temam Mama (Farmer)-Personally I have surprised with the income difference for someone who produce wheat and potato (cost-benefit analysis). I think everybody can understand and get the point. So, we highly encourage crop diversification.
- -The size of trials/ activities done by AR team and human power is unbalanced and is better if you go only with manageable size since it is a trial and you are seeking for quality data.
- Kelil H/Ahmed (kebele chairman)- We will take this all as an assignment and try to correct in the next season as most of the problem related to our failure in managing what we are given with.
- We have to break the culture of mono-cropping which is the bottle neck of farmers in Bale and adopt crop/ product diversification.
- Selected FRG should have to work strongly and closely with The TG and encourage their members.
- It is better if you provide us with explanatory message like photo, video and the like for better understanding.

Ilu-Sanbitu kebele representatives to Sinana woreda IP

Finally, nomination of 5 representatives of Ilu-Sanbitu Kebele IP was undertaken. Those elected representative will become woreda IP member. The selection criteria were:

- From farmers who have participated in more than 3 research protocols
- Able to write and read
- Able to reflect kebele level issues on the woreda IP meetings and give feedback to the Kebele IPs.
- Gender balance
- 1-DA'S coordinator- directly represented
- 1- kebele chairman

List of selected representative for woreda IP members representing Ilu-sanbitu kebele:

1. Kelil H/Ahmed (kebele chairman)
2. Abebe Gonfa (kebele office of agriculture head)
3. Chaltu Dessie (female farmer)
4. Belayinesh Tiki (female farmer)
5. Ahmed H/Hussen (male farmer)

Ways forward by Addisu Asfaw

- Registration of interested farmers who can afford to buy apple seedlings to plant in the coming main season need to be registered with Temam Mama and DAs. We need to get the list as soon as possible to order the required amount of seedlings early.
- Animal feed – Napier grass plantation will be implemented soon with SARC
- Rope and washer pump will be introduced with certain farmers from Apple and irrigated fodder FRGs.
- Crop residue management: feeding trough will be constructed for 5-6 farmers
- Hand driven tractor and motor pump will be introduced by clustering 2-8 farmers who have who have irrigable land adjacent to river shaya with the objective to relay potato with wheat.
- Apple Nursery establishment discussing with woreda office of agriculture

Participants

SN.	Name	sex	Type FRG
1	Umer Kedir	M	Tree Lucerne FRG-Chairman
2	Seida Hassen	F	Apple FRG -member
3	Nugussie Badane	M	Respected elder (Christian)-kebele IP member
4	Feyise Seboka	F	Wheat FRG member
5	Kelil H/Ahmed	M	Potato FRG and Kebele IP Technical group
6	Ayinalem Megersa	F	Oat –Vetch FRG -member
7	Chaltu Dessie	F	Tree Lucerne FRG-member
8	Ahmed H/Hussen	M	Apple FRG -Secretary
9	Temam Mama	M	Apple FRG -Chairman
10	Siraj Kefa	M	Potato FRG -Chairman
11	Nuho H/Umer	M	Oat –Vetch FRG -Secretary
12	Esmael Abubeker	M	Oat –Vetch FRG -Chairman
13	Shimelis Bekele	M	Wheat FRG-Secretary
14	Belayinesh Tiki	F	Tree Lucerne FRG -Secretary
15	Bedriya Umer	F	Ilu Sanbitu kebele council office-IP member
16	Tigist teshome	F	DA and kebele IP Technical group
17	Birtukuan Tadesse	F	DA and kebele IP Technical group
18	Belayinesh Dinku	F	Women and children affair- kebele IP member
19	Muhammed Amano	M	DA and kebele IP Technical group
20	H/Waliyi K/Muhammed	M	Primary Cooperative head-Kebele IP member
21	Temam kefa	M	Tree Lucerne FRG-member