

There is no doubt that with 478 farmers per DA and currently 12 500 FTCs Ethiopia's agricultural extension system is ahead of most parts of the World in quantitative ways. However, the majority of Ethiopian farmers continue to live in poverty, and the country's food insecurity problem persists in spite of huge investment in the agricultural sector. The high budget allocation of 16 % of the GDP invested in agriculture shows a commitment of the government to the development of the agricultural sector, but the effects are still far from the actual potential. The project "Improving Agricultural Extension Systems for Wider Adoption of Technologies" is trying to make a substantial contribution to facilitate a change in the Ethiopian agricultural extension system. As adoption of technologies is still low in most parts of Ethiopia, this project wants to try out new approaches to increase adoption rates. This policy brief reviews existing institutions in Ethiopia that are relevant to knowledge and agricultural technology transfer, and it analysis the pros and cons of the institutional landscape and organizational structures under the agro-ecological systems within the project area.



The above listed institutions are relevant for knowledge and agricultural technology transfer, but their impact on the success and failure of extension varies broadly. As there are also many linkages between them, and no institution solely is responsible for extension on its own, this analysis looks at the overall pros and cons across these institutions.

- High numbers of development agents per farmer: 21 DAs per 10,000 farmers in high potential areas
- The existence of a Participatory Extension System (PES) and the ADPLAC points to the understanding of the importance of involving farmers in decision-making
- Huge resources available for extension in relation to the total budget of agriculture.
- Mere numbers of DAs have potential to really reach out to farmers even in the remotest areas and to capture and report back their real needs.
- Well established and functioning training institutes for DAs all over the country.

PROS



- *Many trained development agents decide not to work as development agent: already in 2009 83,000 DAs were trained, but in 2017 only 56,000 were actually working as DAs*
- *Many disincentives for DAs such as poor working environment (inadequate housing, inadequate office facilities, limited transportation facilities etc.) and unattractive career path*
- *Both PES and ADPLAC fail to live up to the promised achievements of enabling more participation: the understanding of participation puts it on a very low level of empowerment.*
- *Insufficient resources for realisation of ADPLAC, improvement of the FTCs, extension activities.*
- *No endemic vision for participation and empowerment in agricultural development existing in the extension system.*

CONS

Recommendations:

- Curricula focus on the role and needs of farmers: more components on social interaction, participation, coaching and mentoring, mediation and conflict resolution, communication methods etc.
- Institutionalise already developed new approaches in different parts of the country that are well working and accepted by farmers into government strategies.
- Improve farmers' representation through strengthening of farmers' associations where farmers elect their own representatives that report on behalf of the farmers
- Reach out to innovative farmers, independent of financial and social status, but dependent on their personal skills and abilities (beyond model farmers!)
- Focus on linkages between different existing institutions and the "how" of the interaction between the different actors
- Foster coaching and mentoring, where knowledge emerges within the context
- DAs operating on demand by farmers, provide training on demand not mobilizing people to attend, treat farmers like competent partners
- Hand over more responsibility to farmers: farmer associations, farmer groups, farmer-to-farmer training,...
- Recognise diversity in people & landscapes: no overall solutions
- Monitoring & evaluation of all extension activities crucial!

