

Piloting mini-seed market in Hararghe: Alternative approach to solve seed marketing problem

BENEFIT-ISSD Project, Oromia East Unit, Haramaya University



Motivation

Hararghe farmers are mainly characterized by the use of locally recycled seed crops for several years. Very large number of farmers often knows very little information about the merit and use of quality seeds. The conventional seed distribution via Bureau of agriculture and Natural resource (BoANR) hardly brought impact in terms of seed utilization and farmers satisfaction. To improve this, seed producers' cooperatives (SPCs) model established to solve challenges encountered through conventional seed marketing channels. As a result, majority of SPCs in Hararghe engaged in seed business from 2009-till present. The volume of quality seeds produced exponentially increased and the lives of SPC members improved from year to year. However, seed marketing continue to be a challenge and seed leftover observed at various SPCs. This intervention shows that the seed market in Hararghe is suffering from market imperfection and poor market orientation. Limited marketing communication among seed producers and buyers, lack of information among seed users, weak market orientation of seed producers, limited value addition and packaging are the contributing factors for these problems.

With the objective to enhance the marketing and use of quality seed through SPCs mini-seed marketing facilitated through Abdi Gudina and Burqa Misoma SPCs in collaboration with BENEFIT-ISSD Project of Oromia East unit, Chercher Odabultum farmers' cooperative union. The mini-seed market was conducted at Oda Baso FTC in Oda Bultum woreda on June 5, 2018.



A total of 223 farmers of which (105 women's) representing three seed producers cooperatives (Abdi Gudina, Burqa Misoma and Oda Mada) and seed buyers (local farmers), 26 participants including development agents, woreda experts and heads from Oda Bultum cooperative promotion agency, Bureau of agriculture and Natural resource (BoANR) office, and Chercher Oda Bultum Farmers' Cooperative union was participated.

Description of the activities and outputs

The day before event two major activities was accomplished. First, BENEFIT-ISSD identified and accessed automatic lock-plastic jar that is, transparent-through object. The jar has capacity to accommodate 2kg of seed. This plastic jar was filled and locked with three different crop varieties including Teff (Kuncho, Boset); Common bean (Awash-1, Nasir, Red-woliyta and Mexican-142); and Chick pea (Ararti). A total of 500 plastic Jar was displayed for selling at mini-market. Second, more than 60 diverse crop varieties were organized in

small packs of 0.5-1 kg and displayed on tables. The display tables were arranged and checked to accommodate the different crop portfolios and plastic jars. The programme included opening and introduction sessions, showcase of exhibition stands in a group of 15-20 peoples, and marketing of quality seeds by SPCs.

The exhibition showcases a variety of quality seeds with exceptional qualities such as drought and disease tolerance, early maturity, yield, food and nutritional superiority across different types of crops. SPCs used banners, leaflets, small packed of different crop varieties and oral explanation on the quality of seed, its productivity and the way to use it. There were hot discussion, questions and reflection between seed



sellers and buyers on use of quality of seed, accessibility, source, productivity and price issues. Farmers were discussed and made sure to buy the right varieties adapted to their local agro-ecological conditions. As a result of this promotion, there were large numbers of farmers' competition in the open mini-market to purchase different types of quality seeds. Surprisingly, the buyers' competition to purchase quality seed of Boset variety was skyrocketing. Project experts and partners confirmed that, prior farmers' information about the variety through crowdsourcing trial might contribute for this competition among buyers.

Outcomes

The real competition of actual market for quality seed product and price which is equivalent to the life market shows the high market orientation of Hararghe farmers. Indeed, the mini-market demonstrated interesting finding about buyers (in this case farmers) decision such as face to face information sharing and trust building, size and compatibility of the product (plastic jar), amount of the seed used, and discount price used buy sellers. BENEFIT-ISSD project of Oromia East unit and partners including Chercher Oda Bultum Farmers' cooperative union and cooperative promotion agency was sworn to scale the approach to their respective SPCs.



The min-seed market was strengthened the knowledge, skill and attitude of experts, SPCs. DAs and SPCs, partners and stakeholder on seed marketing approach. Moreover, the mini-seed market approach facilitated the dissemination and marketing of quality seeds in the woreda. The following specific outcome was also met from mini-seed market approach;

- Farmers get to know availability different crop varieties, desirable traits and sources.
- Seed producers cooperatives were able to understand farmers' needs and get an opportunity to create linkages that will help promote their local seed business.
- Market linkage created between SPCs and local farmers
- The behavior and attitude of farmers towards the use of quality seeds were improved.
- Linkage among government extension workers, service providers and SPCs strengthened.
- Government agencies appreciated the approach and committed to take up in their work environment.

Lesson learned

Farmers confirmed that mini-seed market offer them an opportunity to find the right seed crops with the right amount that consider their purchasing power. Representatives from government, partners and stakeholders confirmed that, mini-seed market through facilitation of information sharing, has influenced farmers behavior to buy seeds he/she likes. They also testified their commitment to take up the approach in their work. In the event seed producers and seed users directly communicated particularly about diverse crop varieties having multiple traits. Moreover, the mini-market created opportunities especially for seed producer's cooperatives to promote their seed which enable them to increase their sells volume. Exchange of ideas and face to face communication enhanced trust building among producers, and buyers. The event also enhanced linkage between seed producers and users. Additionally, we learned that value addition such as type and size of equipment has impact on sales value of the product. Seed producers acquired new approach and knowledge about how to sell their seeds. Finally, promotion helped farmers to buy the right product by providing the right information.

The result of the activity was goes viral on Facebook page, through tremendous uploads, likes, shares, tags and comments by many peoples indicates the relevance of the approach.

Testimonials

My name is Rabo Aliyi. I came from Oda Biyo kebele, Oda Bultum woreda. I am very happy today. I viewed different kinds of quality seeds such as Teff, Common bean, chickpea, etc. based on information I heard I bought teff called Boset variety. I used to grow Teff for several years. The problem of local teff is the stalk which is not vigor and it is easily falls by air at maturity time. This resulted in loss of post-harvest. But, today as I heard Boset has strong stalk vigor and medium in height. This means it is not easily fall by air and wind. It also gives high yield and moisture tolerant. That is why I decided to buy Boset. I am also appreciated Abdi Gudina cooperatives for providing the opportunity to buy quality seeds in the village.



My name is Kadir Usman. I came from Oda Baso kebele, Oda Bultum woreda. Today I bought two different types of quality seeds including Boset and Ararti from Abdi Gudina Cooperative. I am happy to get this variety at this planting season. For me quality seed is about development.



My name is Aliyi Abdulahi. I am from Oda Biyo kebele, Oda Bultum woreda. in Hararghe we have very small land for crop production. Unless we use quality seed on this small land size that ensures productivity, we cannot ensure food security of our family. Therefore, today event was very essential to achive food securty goals. From this event, we learned different quality seeds adaptable in our locality with different traits such as early mature, moisture stress, disease resistant, high yield, and other market type crops such as common bean. I thank those who organised the event.



The chairman of Abdi Gudina SPC, Mr Amin Mohammed said, in the preparation phase of this event, I was a bit challenged to have a clear picture of the final outcome. I just followed and did what ISSD experts asked me to do. The experts just showed me the surprising outcome. I sold large number of quality seeds on this event. This technique will solve seed marketing problem of our cooperatives. Our executive committees' knowledge and skill also improved. We will continue using the technique at SPC and farmer training center (FTCs) sites, and during community meeting. I appreciate facilitator of ISSD project for their contribution.



My name is Aisha Abdula. I came from Oda Biyo kebele, Oda Bultum woreda. Today I viewed different kinds of quality seeds both in small pack



and plastic jar. I bought teff (Boset) variety. I participated in the demonstration trial of teff last year. During that, I selected Boset from other teff varieties due to high yield, large seed size and strong stalk that are not damaged by wind. The information I got from experts also complement my knowledge and observation regarding Boset. This year I planned to cover my land with Boset to increase my yield. I will also share this seed to relative in the village.

Show case of mini-seed market in picture



