

Videos are more effective than workshops

IMPACT
STUDY

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The parboiling video

NGOs in Benin organized 80 showings of a farmer-to-farmer video on parboiling. 8,700 people watched the videos; 58% of them were women.

Conventional parboiling called for soaking the rice in a large aluminum pot, and precooking it in the same pot with a little water. The rice was dried in the sun for three days where sand and stones often got into the rice. Improved parboiling used two pots, one on top of each other. The top pot had holes in the bottom to keep the paddy out of the boiling water in the bottom pot. The rice was dried on a clean tarpaulin, not on the ground.

To find out if watching a video can stimulate as much change as attending a workshop with a live demonstration, researchers surveyed 160 women who had attended workshops, videos or both.



Washing rice before parboiling it. Women who watched a training video were more likely to share equipment

Video vs. workshop and live demonstration

The villagers were keen to share ideas from the videos. In 70% of the villages with workshops, no one passed information on to their neighbours. Yet in all of the video villages the women shared information with each other.

Both the NGO staff and the rural women appreciated the farmer-to-farmer video as a 'mass training tool' that helped the viewers to teach themselves and to communicate actively.

The video was more effective at stimulating change than the workshops. More than 95% of those who watched the video began drying their rice on tarpaulins and removing their shoes before stirring the rice, compared to half of those who went to a workshop but did not watch the video. The groups of women that watched the video were more likely than others to band together and share parboiling equipment.

Conclusion

Videos are more democratic and more motivating. In conventional training the participants are friends of the village elites, who select their allies to attend the workshops, where they will be rewarded with a per diem. They may attend even if they are uninterested in parboiling. With open-air videos everyone can attend, even the poorest villagers eager to find a new way to earn money. One year later, the images from the video were still fresh in the women's minds.

Contact: Paul Van Mele | paul@agroinsight.com

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Jeff Bentley