

## Third Step FRG Approach Training

### Reflecting actions in the field and coping in the reality

More than 130 researchers from all around Ethiopia participated in the FRG approach training to share their experiences and practice gender sensitization workshop. FRG approach training Step 3 had been conducted at the agricultural Research Centres of Adami Tulu and Melkassa, and the Universities of Mekelle, Bahir Dar and Hawassa between September and November 2013. The invited participants were those who participated in the Basic and 2nd step FRG approach trainings previously. The trainings were organized with presentation, discussion of the approach implementation based on the actual experiences, and theory and practice of the gender sensitization workshop with groups of farmers. The participants counted 135 including 12 females from 54 different research centers and universities.



(A training session at Melkassa Agricultural Research Centre)

Throughout the training program, the resource persons facilitated the discussion in the way the participants discuss on their own experiences rather than things in general. By doing so, they managed to avoid discussion being somewhat general and end up with "the way should be" conclusions, which is often not applicable to the reality.

For example, at one training, the participants discussed on "how we can facilitate female household members in the FRG research activities". Then, one of the participants raised as it is usually difficult to let the female farmers participate in the activities as much as male farmers do although they are all aware of the importance. Then, the other participants responded that we can improve female participation

by (1) considering the time and place for meeting, trainings so that female household members can easily participate; (2) Invite the husbands to the training also. Usually the husband's support is essential to promote female household members' participation; (3) consider the research topic and design so that female farmers would be interested.

From the questionnaire filled by the participants, we learned that 60.6% of the participants are engaged in some kind of participatory activity with farmers which they could apply what they have learned during the FRG approach trainings.

We expect the participants not to just sit and wait for other project which promotes participatory research activities to come. Rather, we would like them to apply the essence of FRG approach into their daily research activities with farmers such as operational research, action research, pre-scaling up, different on-farm trials, and community services.

## Monitoring FRG based research

### Freshwater fish processing research by Bahir Dar University



(Fishing using a traditional boat made from Papyrus)

FRG II project is supporting a research entitled "Participatory Evaluation of Selected Fish Processing and Preservation Technologies: The case of Lake Tana, Ethiopia" implemented by Bahir Dar University. The research objective is to improve the fish processing method and to explore the possibility to add the market values like sanitization, flavor, taste and appearance of the three different fishes (African catfish, genus *Labeobarbus* and Nile Tilapia). In addition to the above mentioned objectives, the research is expected to contribute to effective

utilization of resources of Lake Tana by reducing the huge amount of fish waste, which is currently generated through inefficient processing and storage methods.



(Traditional method of drying fishes)



(Improved sun-drying method using a transparent tent)

Two different processing techniques are investigated in the research. The first one is drying with newly designed solar tent after gutting followed by filleting into small pieces and rinsing with salt water. The latter is smoking after same treatment. These two technologies differ from the conventional processing method of the local fishers. The local fishers hang fishes on the tree or space under the eaves for drying after the gutting and salting. The conventionally processed fishes attract plenty of flies and are directly left on the ground of warehouse as it is. Finally, the fish is sold to traders for Ethiopians working in Sudan with very cheaper prices. Local fishers don't eat this processed fish, though they eat cocked fresh fish. The microorganism culture examination was performed in the laboratory of Bahir Dar University and the Colony Forming Unit (CFU) of conventionally processed fishes ( $CFU/g=2.7 \times 10^8$ ) was exceeding the standards of hygiene of fresh, frozen, and cold smoked fish ( $CFU/g=10^7$ ) defined by

International Commission on Microbiological Specifications for Food (ICMSF). While CFU of the the dried fish with improved drying method was lower CFU ( $CFU/g=3.2 \times 10^5$ ) than the standard. In the perception survey, fishers respond that they want to eat the dried fish with improved method but not conventionally dried fish.

The challenge of the research is to achieve better processing efficiency, minimized costs and durability of the tent and develop market. In fact, the research team got some comments from the fishers to the technologies; "The structure of the tent should be modified for larger number of fishes to be accommodated", "Need measure against attacks by livestock and wild animals to destroy the tent" and "The improved dried fishes are marketed with lower prices as they are determined based on the weight just like fresh fish in the local market". Therefore, farmer's active acceptance of the improved drying technology is up to market and technology improvement. FRG II will continue to support this research, and looking for further progress in related activities.

## Visualising information

### Extension material development

FRG Project developed the following audio-visual extension materials.

#### CD 1: FRG Approach - Together We Can Make It.

Researchers, extension agents and farmers are talking about the FRG approach and its practical applications.

#### CD 2: Technical Advice Series

- Tef seed rate
- Chickpea sowing method
- Wheat seed treatment

The researcher of each research explains the technology being tested in an easy-to-understand manner.



For obtaining a copy on CD or soft copy, please contact FRG II Project Office.