



FACT SHEET

RESEARCHERS EXAMINE MODELS OF FARM EXTENSION SERVICES TO DISCOVER WHAT WORKS BEST IN HAITI

Feed the Future Haiti Appui à la Recherche et au Développement Agricole (AREA) Support to Agricultural Research and Development

One of AREA's research projects is to introduce new farming production technologies through an effective extension system. New technologies, such as improved varieties of crops and tools, can increase the productivity of Haiti's agricultural sector. Yet the widespread adoption of many agricultural technologies takes years, even decades. Formal extension or technology transfer programs can reduce the lag time between discovery and adoption.

Strategy and activities

AREA's Extension Experiment tests alternative models of technology transfer (or extension) to determine which models are most likely to spur the adoption of innovative techniques and technology among members of Haiti's farmers' associations.

Essentially, if groups of farmers are presented with information about a new technology in three different ways, which group is most likely to try it using their own resources? By gaining a better understanding of this, we will be able to more strategically address farming methods and food insecurity. The technologies and tools being examined include new types of hoes, storage bags, biodegradable peat pods, germination tests and new varieties of crops.



AREA intern Molène Pierre interviews a farmer in the Kenscoff region. AREA researchers have conducted more than 800 interviews with Haitian farmers to learn about their work, interaction with farmers' associations and barriers to implementing new technologies. Photo credit: Pelo Calixte/AREA

Implementation of the project

The three extension models being investigated are:

1. *The Master Farmer*: Centers on an expert who teaches farmers in a lecture-style setting. The trainer holds two classes a week for a month. At the end of the training, the expert distributes new tools and crops to farmers to test on their own land.
2. *The Farmer Field School*: Relies on the community to teach farmers. Over the span of three months, farmers attend weekly classes, where they participate in hands-on learning activities. They have the opportunity to use new technologies while an expert demonstrates and facilitates conversation. Primarily, participants learn from each other in a discussion-style setting.
3. *Distribution Model*: Simply provides farmers with the innovations. Farmers come to a central location, such as a farmer association facility, where they receive new tools and crops and basic information on their use.

Evaluation

Researchers are measuring the effectiveness of the models in four ways:

1. *Baseline*: Determine initial knowledge levels of the farmers. Have they heard of these technologies before? Do they use any of them?
2. *Group Dynamics*: Conduct extensive interviews to determine how the farmers' groups operate. How often do they meet? How are meetings run? Do women feel empowered to speak?
3. *Observation*: Visit at least three meetings of each farmers' association and compare information collected with data from Group Dynamics interviews. Are they conducting meetings like they say they are?
4. *Final Interview*: Follow-up with the farmers who had been interviewed to determine group dynamics. Have they adopted these technologies?

Expected results

- AREA has conducted more than 800 interviews with farmers. This information and other research findings will help us to better understand the relationships and the most critical features of farmers associations, extension models, characteristics of innovations and gender in the adoption of new technologies. By better understanding how farmers' associations operate and communicate information, the better we can help them.
- We anticipate that farmers will adopt a new technology based on the effectiveness and organizational style of the group providing the technology. The likely correlation: The more organized a farmers' association is, the higher the rate of adoption of new technologies.
- During the life of the project, we hope to use the full range of the project's findings to create one or more extension models tailored for Haiti's agricultural sector.
- The project also will serve as a guide to the most effective ways to transfer technology and provide evidence for USAID and others to develop longer-term strategies to change agricultural and natural resource management in Haiti.

For more information

The lead researcher on the Extension Experiment, Boaz Anglade, Ph.D., can be reached at banglade@ufl.edu.

AREA project

In May 2015, the U.S. Agency for International Development awarded a five-year contract to a consortium of three U.S. land grant institutions led by the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences to support its Feed the Future initiative in Haiti to reduce the country's chronic food insecurity. The project — known in French as Appui à la Recherche et au Développement Agricole (AREA) and in English as Support to Agricultural Research and Development — assists Haitian agricultural researchers, professionals and institutions to modernize the country's agricultural sector. The project is funded by USAID as part of Feed the Future, the U.S. Government's global food and security initiative. Visit the AREA project's website at <http://global.ifas.ufl.edu/area-project>.

Feed the Future

Feed the Future is the U.S. Government's global hunger and food security initiative. With a focus on smallholder farmers, particularly women, Feed the Future supports partner countries in developing their agriculture sectors to spur economic growth and trade that increase incomes and reduce hunger, poverty and undernutrition. For more information, visit www.feedthefuture.gov.