



COMMUNICATION MEDIA STUDY IN CAMBODIA

RESEACH SUMMARY

A Collective Research by Agroecology Learning Alliance in Cambodia (ALiSEA) and its Members

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With an increased access to electricity and internet, rural populations in Cambodia currently have better chances to access media on a variety of electronic devices, ranging from TVs, radios, smartphones and many other tools. However, the records of the level of agricultural media accessed by farmers are scarce, while the majority of the populations are farmers. The communication media study was initiated with an aim to contribute to bring this untold situation to light. The study was introduced by Agroecology Learning Alliance in Southeast Asia (ALiSEA) under the support of GRET, and it was jointly developed by 12 ALiSEA Cambodia's members.

The study was developed with 2 main objectives including (1) determining media channels disseminating agriculture knowledge and information that most farmers depend on and how farmers access to those sources, and (2) identifying types of agricultural information and knowledge disseminated to farmers by different stakeholders, and approaches that stakeholders apply to reach target audience.

The research covered a period of 5 months from June to October 2018. It started with the meeting with ALiSEA members to plan and develop the research methodologies, data collection and analysis. In the study there were 354 individual farmer interviews in 10 province and 5 focus group discussions conducted to answer objective 1. There were also involvements from 13 organizations in the online survey to achieve objective 2.

According to the result of the study, it can be concluded that farmers from beneficiary group had better access to agriculture information from informal education and printed materials than their non-beneficiary counterpart. Informal education was selected as the most effective dissemination

approach by most of the respondents as it is considered as an active means that could deliver precise messages. However, the beneficiary group showed low commitment to access education and publishing materials beyond what were provided, and they depend heavily on NGO staff as the main human resource when agriculture supports are needed.

Since TVs are widely available in most of the households in study areas, the weekly access to media through this electronic device is far ahead of other gadgets including smartphones, tablets, radio and computers. Dissemination of agriculture information to farmers through TV platforms seems to guarantee a promising result. However, the interaction between shows and viewers needs to be on the schedule in order to achieve the best result. Furthermore, the emergence of smartphone use among farmers could bring a new hope for development agencies in sharing information online to farmers. This is likely to be achievable in case farmers are trained or instructed on how to use this high-tech device properly.

Development agencies applied different communication strategies with various stakeholders. In disseminating agricultural information to their beneficiaries and other organizations in similar fields, most organizations used information education and experience exchanges as both tools can be achieved effectively under the full control of experienced personnel. On the contrary, in engagement with non-beneficiaries and public audience, they tend to put more focus on social media as it could reach many people quicker and in a huge amount. TVs programs and radio talk shows were not in the communication strategies of the respondents. However, when asked to identify most effective communication approaches, TV programs were ranked third behind social media and informal education.

This study is merely a first step to discover proper communication tools and approaches that could effectively reach farmers in Cambodia. Further studies will be conducted by ALiSEA and its stakeholder to dig deeper to find communication gaps and their solutions, specifically focus on digital communication which is a new trend for younger farmers in Cambodia. ALiSEA welcomes all sort of collaboration for interested organization.