



CONVERSATIONS OF CHANGE

ETHIOPIA



Results in Ethiopia show positive outcomes from CDAIS activities, proving the benefits of integrating functional capacity strengthening across individual, partnership, organisational and national levels. Common to all these levels are the CDAIS team, who tell their stories here alongside other partners. Examples are presented from one of the five innovation partnerships in Ethiopia, and how new ways of doing things introduced by CDAIS since late 2016 have led to positive changes through the strengthening of chickpea cluster farming around Gondar in the north of the country. Organisations involved in the support of chickpea cluster farming, such as the Ministry of Agriculture's Extension Directorate and the NGO Self Help Africa, have also seen clear benefits from self-evaluation of their own internal processes, while CDAIS policy dialogues have led to two issues raised by farmers being transformed into concrete policy changes at the national level. And all those involved confirm that these changes are now irreversible.

Changes at farm level

"We are now becoming researchers in chickpea production", said Awoke Tadese, one of the new chickpea cluster farmers during a field day in Dembia in January 2019. "Before, yields were low. But we identified the cause as a need for suitable crop rotation and a need to implement recommended practices for chickpea production."

A CDAIS field day in Dembia, Gondar in January 2019, where 50 chickpea farmers shared experiences and concerns with 43 partners including extensionists, seed quarantine officers and other government officials, researchers and private actors, who also learn and offer advice. Another benefit was from the adoption of double cropping with a cereal crop grown between chickpea harvests, suggested and debated in earlier CDAIS field days. One farmer, Nega Mebiratu, was clear: "I tried double cropping, with better productivity than the previous cropping season." (Photo: Tegegne Derbe/CDAIS)





Thanks to CDAIS, the amount of certified chickpea seed arriving at Tsehay Multipurpose Farmers' Cooperative Union has increased from 65 tonnes to 125 tonnes in two years.

CDAIS introduced farmer field days, at which government officers, extensionists and researchers meet, discuss, exchange and learn with farmers directly. Awoke added that “these field days are unique because such events including the presence of all these different people do not happen anywhere else in the district and give us opportunities to tell government officials our concerns.”

Endalkachew Abie, CDAIS National Innovation Facilitator and manager of the local Tsehay Multipurpose Farmers' Cooperative Union was proud of the benefits: “The average farm size is about 0.5 hectares, divided into small plots where different crops are grown. The government

strategy is to try and ‘cluster’ farmers’ fields so larger areas of a single crop could be grown, in this case chickpea, with many advantages in terms of mechanisation, pest and disease control, harvesting and marketing. This ‘clustering’ requires farmers to agree to plant the same crop on neighbouring plots at the same time, and coordinate crop practices. Before CDAIS came and brought everyone together, farmers were reluctant. Now, yields have increased, up to 2 tonnes per hectare, and this also allows the production of more quality certified seed for planting and for which farmers get a better price.”

Stakeholders scale out the approach

Bringing everyone together has also had benefits for all involved, as Abebe Hailu from the Gondar Agricultural Research Centre explained: “Before, I would stay in my office and google a lot, now I go to the field and identify problems and look for solutions directly with farmers, and I know more people who I can approach to resolve issues. The director and staff see the benefits of this new approach too, as farmers now come to us to ask for training and new varieties. Because of this, the Centre is also now building new delocalised research stations so researchers can interact more with farmers. And these changes will not stop here, they will only get bigger.”

A similar story of clear outcomes – and that the CDAIS approach is being scaled up by the organisations involved – came from Demelew Nebiyu, Director of the Quality Control and Quarantine Gondar branch office: “Before CDAIS, I would only communicate by phone or letter, but since getting together and through the Action Plan we developed together to reach our goals, my relationship with others has changed a lot – with the seed union, government extensionists, researchers and farmers. A pivotal moment was the first field day I attended when farmers saw the benefits of clustering, and that they could keep their fields but gain extra benefits from all planting improved varieties at the same time, in the same place. From these successes, clustering is now spreading to other crops in the area. And at our quarterly meetings I shared my experience with other branch directors, and the regional director has allocated a budget to start organising similar meetings throughout Amhara Region.”

Quiet personal revolutions...

At all levels, CDAIS has made unquestionable and irreversible impacts on individual behaviour. Without exception, everyone involved highlighted the changes within themselves since they started to work with CDAIS, and how they also use the new skills, knowledge and attitudes in other aspects of their life and work.

Here is a selection from some of those.

“The new skills in facilitating diverse multi-stakeholder groups with CDAIS has given me more confidence. Now I listen more, consider others’ views and am more open to changing my own opinion. All the soft skill trainings particularly decision-making and negotiating skills are also very valuable, as well as new tools like timeline, problem/solution tree, netmapping and coaching plan.. I have also adopted what I have learnt in my teaching so my students gain too, and that led me to start a new course in ‘partnerships and networking for adult education and community development’.”

Turuwark Warkineh, National Innovation Facilitator, chickpea partnership

“I now use tools like problem identification learnt through CDAIS in other activities, including how we organise our general assemblies, and with other crops, not just chickpea. Everyone in our seed union has benefited, and our reporting procedures are now much better as well. And the new advocacy, communications and negotiation skills I have learnt are very valuable to me in many different ways.”

Endalkachew Abie, National Innovation Facilitator, chickpea partnership

“How to develop an Action Plan together with others and the importance of following up have been very important to me, and how I organise my work has improved a lot. Also, in meetings with farmers and others I used to just present my views, whereas now I invite and encourage inputs from others.”

Misganaw Sendeku, associate National Innovation Facilitator, chickpea partnership

“From CDAIS, I have developed many new skills – facilitation, negotiation, reporting – which I now apply in my university teaching. I understand value chains better now, and have learnt to see challenges as potential opportunities. The use of progress markers to measure changes in behaviour and functional capacity have also helped me in evaluating my own performance, and this has really improved my planning and time management in everything I do.”

Tegenge Derbe, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Associate

“My communications skills have helped me to resolve conflicts, and working in partnerships has shown me the importance of collaborating. The coaching plan is a very useful tool that I will use again, and I have seen the real value of group reflection in helping to achieve common objectives.”

Meti Tamrat, National Innovation Facilitator, milk partnership

“I have learnt a lot of new social skills and these have changed my attitude totally. Now I ‘think better’. Before I would impose my views in meetings, now I listen, balance, analyse and am much more flexible in working with others. CDAIS has really ‘shaped me up’.”

Taffase Mesfin, National Innovation Facilitator, milk partnership

“These new field days help us to look at the limitations of our farming activities. Together with agricultural experts, quarantine officers and the seed cooperative, we now have a better understanding of what we can do, based on joint observations of our own farms.”

Wube Derib chickpea farmer, Dembia, Gondar

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Sustainability and scaling up are also seen in other partnerships, for example with malt barley, as Chilot Tizale, Deputy Director General of the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research, explained: “We will continue to apply learnings from CDAIS in the malt barley partnership, and also look at how we can use this approach in other aspects of our organisation’s work, using our own resources. We were sceptical at first about the value of strengthening functional capacities. But over time we have seen the value of this, and that they can help to increase the impacts of using our traditional, technical approach.”

“CDAIS has been very fruitful, as I now work with farmers and others, looking at problems and finding solutions to increase chickpea production. Cluster farming is one way to do this, a great innovation that CDAIS has helped to spread.”

Abebe Hailu Gondar Agricultural Research Centre

Organisational changes

Part of the CDAIS approach is to work with key innovation support service providers. This involves the CDAIS team working with an organisation to identify capacity gaps, develop a vision, and set priority objectives. This might, for example, require training to improve services and subsequent impact. Here, experiences from two of the three selected organisations in Ethiopia are shared, showing that this has led to positive outcomes that are not only sustainable, but that are likely to be scaled out after the project ends.

“Functional capacities were not given adequate attention before, when we only considered technical issues”, explained Fasil Kelemework from Ethiopia branch of Self Help Africa. And the changes were evident. “CDAIS has given us a new focus on communication, facilitation and negotiation, and we now apply these in training courses for farmer cooperatives”, he said. “And alongside this, our organisation uses what



“The CDAIS partnership has created so many new opportunities for working together.” Abebe Hailu, Gondar Agricultural Research Centre.



“We all now clearly know our respective responsibilities.” Demelew Nebiyu, Gondar Quality Control and Quarantine branch office.

we have learnt from the community seed partnership, such as helping cooperatives to prepare funding proposals themselves. The action plan helped us identify issues in our internal and external communications and services. It has led to increased transparency, and there have been changes that I thought were unattainable. We will now use our capacity development budget to promote soft skill development throughout our organisation, catalysing sharing and improving our reflection and communication. And these changes don’t cost us anything, needing only commitment and a little staff time.”

Perhaps even more significant are the changes seen in the Ministry of Agriculture extension directorate, as described by its director, Yenenesh Egu: “I see this soft skill training already leading to behavioural change at all levels. A key moment was a workshop including many other ministry directorates and other external actors in October 2018. We identified capacity gaps and developed an Action Plan, which was validated with other directorates at a follow-up workshop in December. This was all really new for us, and it helped to build trust in our relationships, and this was fundamental in allowing us to develop a proposal to scale out the new approach. Thanks to the new confidence gained from CDAIS, I pushed for an innovative ‘integrated model village’ programme. Now the Ethiopian Government has allocated money to implement this, with potential benefits in the long term for all of our 53,000 extension staff nationwide, and the 16 million farmers who they directly support.”

“CDAIS brings bigger impacts because it targets policy-level changes, but includes actors at all levels through multi-stakeholder platforms and regular meetings. And these positive changes don’t cost us anything.”

Fasil Kelemework Head of Programmes, Self Help Africa, Ethiopia office

Linking farmers to organisational and national-level changes

A key concept of the CDAIS approach is not only to aim for changes in attitudes, skills, knowledge and practices at individual, partnership, organisational and national levels, but also to provide spaces to link these levels. In Ethiopia, as Amanuel Assefa, CDAIS Country Programme Manager, said, “Of our major successes, the first involved the community-based seed partnership. After discussions at the outset, there was a clear issue with a policy that was leading to increased risks for the local seed union, affecting the production and availability of seed for farmers.

A draft directive was developed and agreed at a regional policy workshop in Harwassa in May 2018, which was been submitted at the regional level in December, with formal approval expected in February 2019.

A second success was observed with the feed quality and safety partnership, where CDAIS facilitated and supported members to develop a new directive on feed risk assessment. The directives were presented during a national dialogue in December 2018 which brought together some 45 participants. The event, officiated by the State Minister of Agriculture and the FAO Representative to Ethiopia, provided a space for actors to raise awareness on the directives and recommend actions for their approval. “The CDAIS policy dialogue also served as a space for actors to share their views with policy and decision makers and to recommend changes/improvements in policies related to the feed risk assessment, communication and management directives”, said Abdoulaye Saley Moussa from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). These examples show how the CDAIS approach can, in just a few years, see issues raised by farmers and local-level organisations discussed at local, regional and national levels, leading to changes in government policy. And as several team members noted, “these would not have happened without CDAIS”.

Samson Eshetu, Lead National Innovation Facilitator, added, “not forgetting the national marketplace event, where members of the chickpea partnership impressed with their presentation, and interested a USAID project to support their idea for adding value through processing. CDAIS helped the chickpea partnership to develop a technical working group and a convincing proposal, learning in the process, and they got the funding.” These are just a few examples among the many, and other changes are likely to have occurred ‘off the radar’.

“An important reason for the successes seen in Ethiopia comes from having a strong national team that supports each other in reflecting and learning.”

Hanneke Boute Vermeulen Agrinatura Focal Person for Ethiopia

Innovation partnerships in Ethiopia



Chickpea cluster farming

Facilitators: Turuwark Warkineh, Endalkachew Abie, Misganaw Sendeku (associate)

Near the Dembia chickpea belt in North Gondar, the Tsehay Farmer Cooperative Union and other stakeholders identified fragmented production, poor control of chickpea diseases and pests, and limited coordination among value chain actors as key challenges. CDAIS strengthened the capacity of everyone in the partnership and created space for stakeholder interaction. Through this, and regular farmer fields days, chickpea 'cluster farming' was successfully practised after having previously failed, when farmers could see the benefits from coordinated input supply, field operations, marketing and lobbying.



Community-based seed production

Facilitators: Tegegne Wakoya, Tessema Alemayhu

Shortage of quality seed is a major challenge undermining smallholder productivity in Ethiopia, with only 20% of demand met nationally. In response, Self Help Africa helped establish the EDGET Seed Production and Marketing Cooperative Union in Butagira, but the quota-based seed marketing system was identified as a critical problem. With the Ministry of Agriculture, seed quality control agency, research institutes and others, CDAIS supported the union in establishing enforceable contracts through dialogue with regional policy makers, and a new directive that prevents seed producers from losses due to breaking contracts, was developed.



Feed safety and quality

Facilitators: Getachew Asmare, Gemechis Jaleta

The quality and safety of livestock feed was identified as a critical challenge to building consumer confidence in animal products. High levels of aflatoxin in dairy products was a

triggering factor for stakeholders to consider the development of a directive for feed risk assessment, risk management and risk communication. The partnership became involved in a national task force including the government, NGOs, industry and farmer associations around Addis Ababa. CDAIS supported the development of a legal framework and guidelines. The directive is soon to be approved by the Ministry of Agriculture's national Veterinary Drugs and Feed Administration and Control Authority (VDFACA).



Malt barley production and marketing

Facilitators: Tolesa Alemu, Abiro Tigabie

Domestic production of malt barley is not keeping pace with a market growing at 15-20% annually, and 60% of this demand is imported. Arsi and Bale zones in Oromia regional state have tremendous potential to produce more, but stakeholders identified a shortage of quality seed as a key issue. CDAIS supported Kulumsa Agricultural Research Centre in partnership with government organisations, breweries and NGOs, to work closely with farmer cooperatives, and this led to farmers being able to greatly increase the production of quality malt barley seed.



Milk demand stimulation

Facilitators: Tatek Tesfaye, Taffase Mesfin, Meti Tamrat

Average annual milk consumption per person in Ethiopia is very low, at 20-25 litres/year, compared to 120 litres in Kenya and 180 litres in Sudan, with consumption of processed dairy products also low. The market for pasteurized milk is also low because more than 85% of demand is met by the informal system that trades in raw milk. Identified challenges included limited awareness of the benefits of pasteurized milk, and the health risks of unpasteurized milk. CDAIS supported the Ethiopian Milk Processor Industry Association (EMPIA), the Addis Ababa Bureau of Education and others to initiate school milk feeding at national level. This would open up a new market for pasteurized milk, improve the health and performance of school children, and support market linkages of smallholder dairy farmers and the milk industry.

Key lessons learnt

“Before, we saw the agricultural extension-to-farmer relationship as a simple top-down approach”, said Amanuel Assefa. “But complex value chains – including producers, processors and government and private experts – require a different approach to catalyse agricultural innovation. CDAIS is the first in Ethiopia to have an integrated approach to address capacity development at individual, partnership, organisational and policy levels. Before we had theories, but thanks to CDAIS now we have concrete examples and [see] how we can overcome the challenges.” Samson concurred: “Identifying policy challenges from the grass roots level and working up was something new that CDAIS introduced, and this gives stakeholders in the partnership level a sense of ownership and the knowledge that their voice is being heard.”

“A key part of the success of CDAIS was the training and coaching of national innovation facilitators,” explained Amanuel, “and they have proven themselves in being able to facilitate their own partnerships. Some have also been able to participate in international forums and have gained valuable experience in many other ways.” And everyone involved in the project concurs. In addition, for Elias Zerfu, Lead Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Coordinator, “the most valuable aspect was providing a space for focused joint reflection”. Samson agreed, saying that “this is what makes CDAIS unique, along with the coaching plan as a ‘one-stop shop’, including planning, implementation and monitoring in a single document”.

But there was also reflection from the CDAIS team. “I think that innovation support service organisations offer the best opportunity for change – they could be one of the key change makers”, considered Amanuel, “Next time, it would be valuable to assess what would happen if the approach started with organisations rather than with partnerships. Also, we still have some way to go [in] bridging gaps at the highest level, especially in how strengthening functional capacities can catalyse agricultural innovations, and how we can best address bottlenecks at the national level. But I see advances and am hopeful that we can see results in the long term.” Elias agreed, adding, “the seeds of change we have helped to sow at the national level still need to grow, this will require more time”.

There have been clear outcomes of the CDAIS approach at individual, partnership and organisational levels, but for national-level changes, senior CDAIS team members considered that more time would be needed. Moreover, an extra year was requested to consolidate the progress made at all levels. But Amanuel also sees opportunities: “Since November 2018, we have a new Ministry of Technology and Innovation, and we can build links there and hopefully advance the adoption of the CDAIS approach more widely.”

In summary, trained and coached facilitators and appropriate tools allow for increased dialogue across all levels of agricultural innovation systems, including smallholders, and pave the way to enhance the innovation environment through adapted policies. Agrinatura Focal Person Hanneke Bouta Vermeulen concluded, “Many of these changes would not have been possible without the joint team effort. Working together with several organisations was not always easy, but we did our best to apply the principles that CDAIS promotes ourselves – of joint analysis, action, collaboration, reflection and learning. There was also room for experimentation with these new ideas on agricultural innovation systems, and the people we work with have noticed and appreciated these real life examples.”

This story results from the work of the CDAIS Ethiopia country team is based on interviews with them and various other partners.

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See also: *Innovating with chickpea cluster farming* (Warkineh, T., Abie, E. and Yasabu, S.). pp96–101, in: Agrinatura and FAO, 2018. *Building Competence and Confidence in Agricultural Innovation. Stories of Change*. Pasiecznik, N. (ed.). Agrinatura, Paris, France and FAO, Rome, Italy. 196pp.

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