

Fighting Striga videos in Mali

IMPACT
STUDY

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Introduction

In 2011, Agro-Insight collaborated with ICRISAT to make a DVD with 10 videos on managing Striga, a parasitic weed. ICRISAT distributed thousands of DVDs across West and East Africa, in French, English and local languages. The videos were distributed through partners. There was little facilitation (e.g. question and answer sessions) so the videos had to stand on their own.



Farmers strengthened their communities, learned new techniques, and improved yields of cereal crops

Social and technical innovations

Farmers who watched the videos made technical and social innovations. Farmers adapted the techniques for fighting Striga, e.g. creating new styles of intercropping cereals and legumes, composting, hand-pulling striga, testing new crop varieties, improved storage of cowpea seed, and experiments with microdosing (adding some organic or mineral fertilizer near the base of each plant).

The videos did not explicitly suggest new styles of social interaction, but in many villages people did notice ideas on the video that sparked social change. For example, some women's groups were strengthened by using simple accounting methods to know if they were making or losing money. Other women joined together to earn money by hand-pulling Striga for other farmers. In Kouna, local leaders organised a video committee to ensure that everyone in the large village was able to watch the videos (Bentley et al. 2017).

Higher yields adapt to climate change

A study by Zoundji et al. (2018) found that in villages where farmers had seen the videos, many more farmers had adopted innovations than where the videos had not been seen. For example, 99% of farmers in video villages were combining crop rotation with intercropping vs just 57% in other villages. The numbers were 99% vs 0% for microdosing, 94% vs 52% for crop diversification and 78% vs 17% for the use of improved short-cycle seed varieties.

Women's groups in the villages of Daga and Sirakélé started selling improved cereal seed to meet the demands of farmers who had watched the videos and now appreciated the new seed. The videos inspired both women's groups to become seed dealers in their village. After 4 years of using the improved techniques, farmers were harvesting 14-30% higher yields of traditional food security crops. The innovations were helping farmers to successfully adapt to a warmer, dryer climate.

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Bentley, J, P Van Mele, S Touré, T van Mourik, S Guindo & G Zoundji 2017 [Seeds of the Devil Weed](#): Local Knowledge & Learning from Videos in Mali. In P. Sillitoe (Ed) *Indigenous Knowledge: Enhancing its Contribution to Natural Resources Management*. Wallingford: CABI.

Zoundji, GC, SD Vodouhê, F Okry, J Bentley & RC Tossou 2018 [Beyond Striga Management](#): Learning Videos Enhanced Farmers' Knowledge on Climate-Smart Agriculture in Mali. *Sustainable Agriculture Research* 7(1), 80-91.

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Summary &
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