



All  Agricultural Commodities Programme



Experiential and Participatory Learning Methodology in Organic Cotton production

Related to the LoA PR. NR. 42592 binding ICEA to FAO

WP3

*Training module for the trainer/facilitator
that will manage/guide the learning process*



**In collaboration
with:**



Istituto per la Certificazione Etica ed Ambientale

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The All ACP Agricultural Commodities Programme

This training module is part of the Experiential Learning Methodology that has been developed in Tanzania in the context of the EU-funded **All ACP Agricultural Commodities Programme (AAACP)**. This is an interagency initiative being implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC), the International Trade Centre (ITC), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and The World Bank. This four-year programme will end in December 2011.

The overall objective of the AAACP is to reduce income vulnerability and improve the livelihoods of producers dependent on agricultural commodities - in the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific regions (ACP) - by building the capacity of actors along commodity chains to develop and implement sustainable value chain strategies.

Within FAO, the AAACP is being implemented by the Trade and Markets Division (EST), the Rural Infrastructure and Agro-Industries Division (AGS), and the Plant Production and Protection Division (AGP). Each division has the responsibility of the implementation of the following four outcomes:

1. Improve the capacity of chain actors to develop and implement national commodity strategies
2. Improve access to markets, factors of production and services
3. Develop and enhance access to instruments to reduce producers' income vulnerability
4. Capitalize on the synergies of International Organizations, EU and ACP actors in the area of agricultural commodities

1 Aim and target group

This training module is intended to provide the following knowledge and competencies:

- a) Soil properties and soil fertility management
- b) Organic manures and other natural fertilizers
- c) Experiential participatory learning

The training section is addressed to the BioRe supervisors and field extensionists, as well as to the lead farmers.

Topics a) and b) are based on FiBL manual on organic cotton (Eyhorn)¹ as well as on the IFOAM-FiBL Training manual (Eyhorn, Heeb, Weidmann)².

2 Management of the training module

This training module is part of the Experiential Learning process that is intended to provide field extensionists and lead farmers with a learning environment so that they can achieve the goal of improving the soil fertility management. At the same time, this module is intended to be an example or a template for different topics.

In the Experiential Learning process we assume that field extensionists and lead farmers already have a wealth of experience, and knowledge to share. At the same time, we also assume that there may be some misconceptions as well some local knowledge gaps to be filled. Therefore this Training Module is oriented to providing basic soil and soil fertility management knowledge and skills, adopting a participatory approach so that farmer experience is integrated into the programme.

According to that, the programme includes group works and practical activities like the observation of soil profile in the field. These activities should be the occasion for the facilitators to involve farmers asking questions, and to add his/her knowledge replying to farmers responses.

¹ F. Eyhorn (2005), Soil Fertility Training Manual. Soil Properties, Soil Fertility Management and Plant Nutrition in Organic Cotton, FiBL

² IFOAM, FiBL (2002), IFOAM training manual. Training Manual for Organic Agriculture in the Arid and Semi-arid Tropics.

2.1 Recommendation

[Building rapport]

“Building rapport” refers to establishing a connection, a relationship with participants that facilitates comfortable and open communication. Rapport is important to the facilitation process, because it can dramatically influence the willingness of field extensionists and lead farmers to take actively part to the training session, answer openly the questions, etc.

To establish rapport, it is helpful to outline the purpose and format of the training module at the beginning of the session. Participants should be told that everyone is expected to participate, and divergent views are welcome.

[Trainer/facilitator role]

One of the tasks of the trainer/facilitator is to assist the group so that participants can support one another after the training session is over, and experiential learning activities are supposed to be developed and implemented.

The trainer/facilitator has to learn to stand back and not present himself as the expert, rather a source for the free use of learners. He/she must be able to intervene or stay remote at the appropriate moments; to lead the learning process, to offer relevant activities, but allowing them to dig themselves out of the holes they have dug for themselves.

[Group work]

In group works, the tasks are used as vehicles of learning where these inputs get reinforced through experiential learning and rigorous and in-depth reviews. Very rarely, inputs are given in groups to have same level of learning progress for all groups.

Group work, discussion rounds and field works (soil profile, observation in demo plots etc.) should be build-in, hand-outs for the participants should be prepared (at least visual presentations as posters and drawings), and participants should be encouraged to take notes and to use them for their inputs as trainers.

[Identification of main actions for improving soil fertility]

Lead farmers and the field extensionists, with the support of the trainer/facilitator, jointly gather ideas on main actions to be implemented in the host farms. The ideas arising from the training session should be screened systematically, critically reviewed, and the most promising ones selected for implementation.

Annex I - Training programme

June 3 rd , Thursday				
Time	Topic	Content	Objective	Method
09.00	Welcome, Introduction to the training "rules"	Idea, aims, program, rules	Motivation, overview on expectations of participants, approval of program and rules	Handout of program, Introduction round
09.20	The importance of soil	Brainstorming (Ask: Why is it important for their work to know about soil?)	Motivation, ice breaking	Brainstorming with participants, note on white board
10.30	Tea break			
11.00	Feeling and seeing the soil	Field visit at M. farm	Sensualize the soil together with the key features	Soil profile, texture, what is a good soil?, roots, soil biology
12.30	Lunch break			
	Plant nutrition Timing of manure application (draw axis)	Requirements of plants; Nutrient contents of manures and fertilizers; considering the time needed for decomposition of the manure	Know-how on manures, fertilizers and plant needs (focus on cotton)	Ask which manures and fertilizers they know; discuss their significance, advantages and disadvantages.
13.30	Group work: soil properties and soil fertility management	Soil specific management practices	Understand the relation of soil properties and farm management	Introduce group work; form 3 groups, each takes a soil sample and fills in the chart
15.30	Presentation of group work	Ditto	ditto	Presentation in plenum (each 5-10 min); summary
16.45	End day 1	Summarize feedbacks on learning		

June 4 th , Friday				
Time	Topic	Content	Objective	Method
09.00	Recap day 1			
09.20	Experiential participatory learning	How to create knowledge and skills; the principles of choice and interest. The importance of the dream or vision; building new experience by innovating; WP3. Develop a "Dream-list" (my dream is to see....)	Enhance the learning climate; make the learning process concrete and visible; changing mind-sets. Motivate and empower to handle own training and extension sessions. The dream list as a group outcome will be further developed in the afternoon session	Reflection- discussion- asking questions. Develop the system of key concepts required for learning. Make analogies: communication- water, knowledge- manure. Discuss these topics in the context of soil fertility. Keep enough time to digest the new learnings. As open and interactive as possible.
12.30	Lunch break			
13.30	Soil fertility management	Soil specific management practices	Understand the relation of soil properties and farm management	Group work: soil properties and soil fertility management
14.30	Presentation of group work			discussion
15.30	Feedback to the training/workshop	Brief review of the day, what did we learn? Rating of the training / workshop; evaluation	Reflection on what we did today; get feedback for improving the training	One participant to summarize the day; stick points on chart to the statement where they agree;
16.45	Closure		Each participant gets clarity for an action plan or for the design of his/her own training course	