

Theory in practice: MilkIT innovation platforms in India's Himalayan mountains

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S E A M E O
SEARCA

Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study
and Research in Agriculture
Science and Education for Agriculture and Development



Objectives of session

Key Themes Covered

- Institutional Innovation: Productivity Innovation
- Multi-stakeholder participation
- Well-designed platform innovation functions leading to impact

Key Learning Outcomes

1. Use a real life case to understand how to design productivity innovations in dairy farming, namely improving market linkages and improving feedstock
2. Learn how to facilitate multi-stakeholder participation and engagement, in order to create robust Innovative Platforms
3. Understand how well-designed platform functions can create grassroots-powered IPs
4. Discuss and debate how collaboration and communication between multiple stakeholders can be increased to create positive outcomes within an Innovation Platform (IP).

The basics – what's this case about?

- Who is our protagonist?
- What keeps her up at night?



TULSI DEVI

- Tulsi Devi is a 39-year-old widow from the Baseri village in the Himalayan hills of Uttarakhand, India
- Before the MilkIT IP, she was struggling even to pay school fees for her children and had to send one child away to a bigger city to find work.
- After joining the MilkIT IP, she was able to generate a regular income and even send her children to school. After the death of her husband, she was left with just one cow and a buffalo and barely enough land to grow crops to feed her family
- She was far off from the local market, making it impossible for her to sell surplus milk.
- She struggled to pay school fees for her children
- Seeing no other option, she sent her eldest son who was only 15 to Delhi to work in a factory.

Many Others like Tulsi Devi



FORMATION OF THE IP

- The MilkIT IP was formed by ILRI
- Beginning of 2013
- Covered 1,244 families in Himalayan region of Uttarakhand
- Main beneficiaries were women

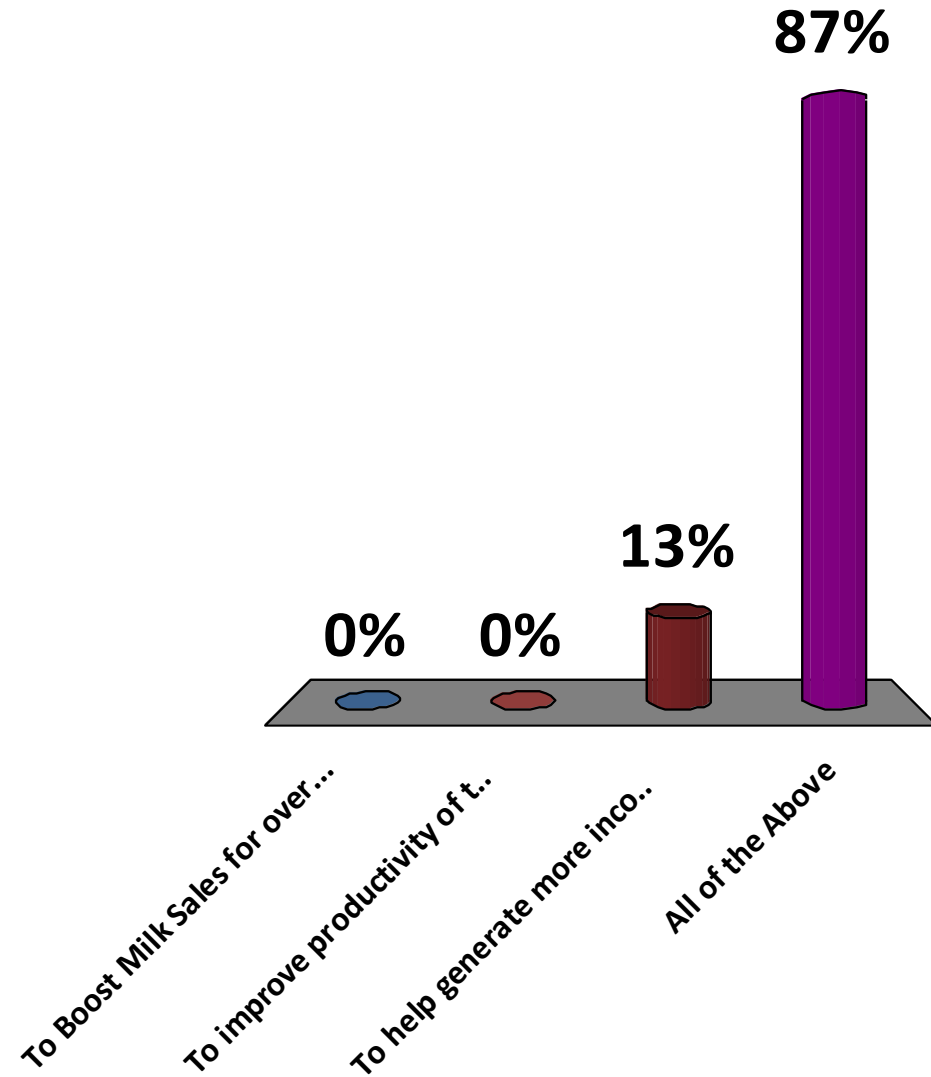


Shall we click a bit?

- Let's recap the case study through a few questions...

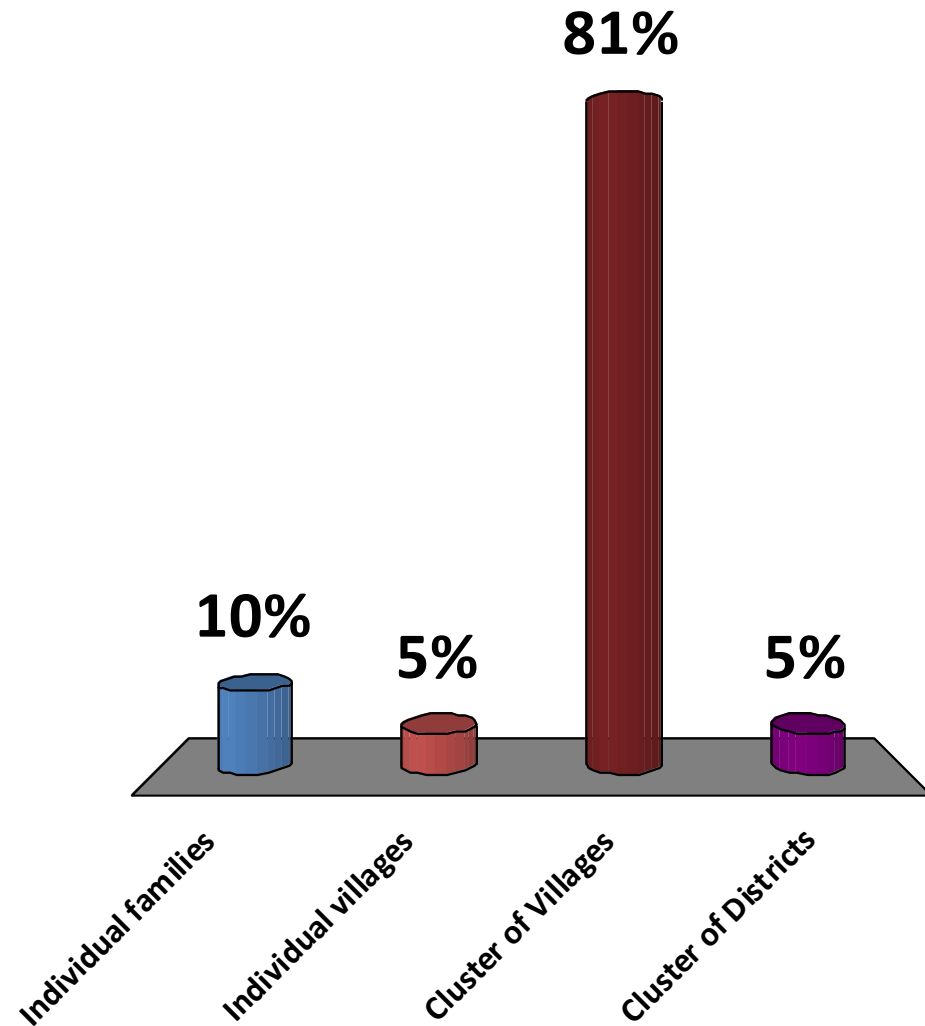
What were the key objectives of the MilkIT IP?

- A. *To Boost Milk Sales for over 1,200 families in 21 villages*
- B. *To improve productivity of the dairy industry in the region*
- C. *To help generate more income through dairy marketing.*
- D. *All of the Above*



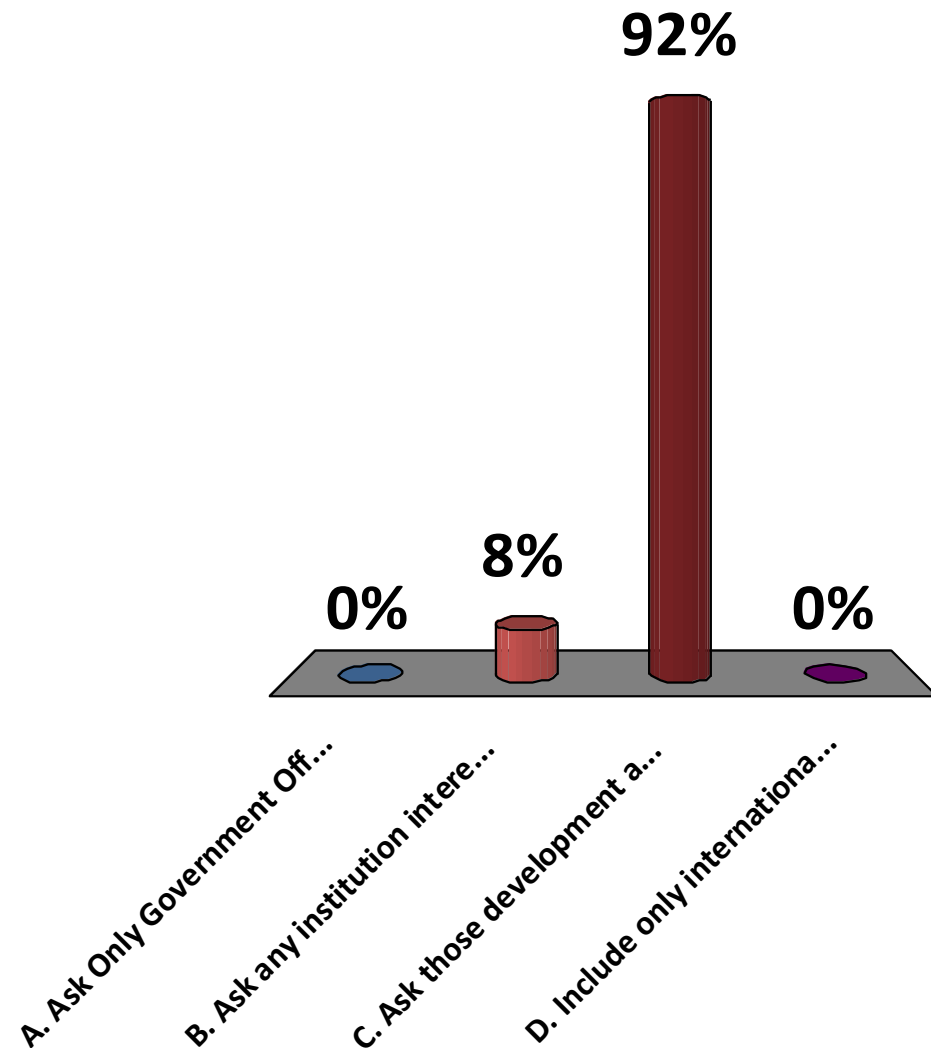
What geographical units did the MilkIT IP focus on to carry out the work of the IP?

- A. Individual families*
- B. Individual villages*
- C. Cluster of Villages*
- D. Cluster of Districts*



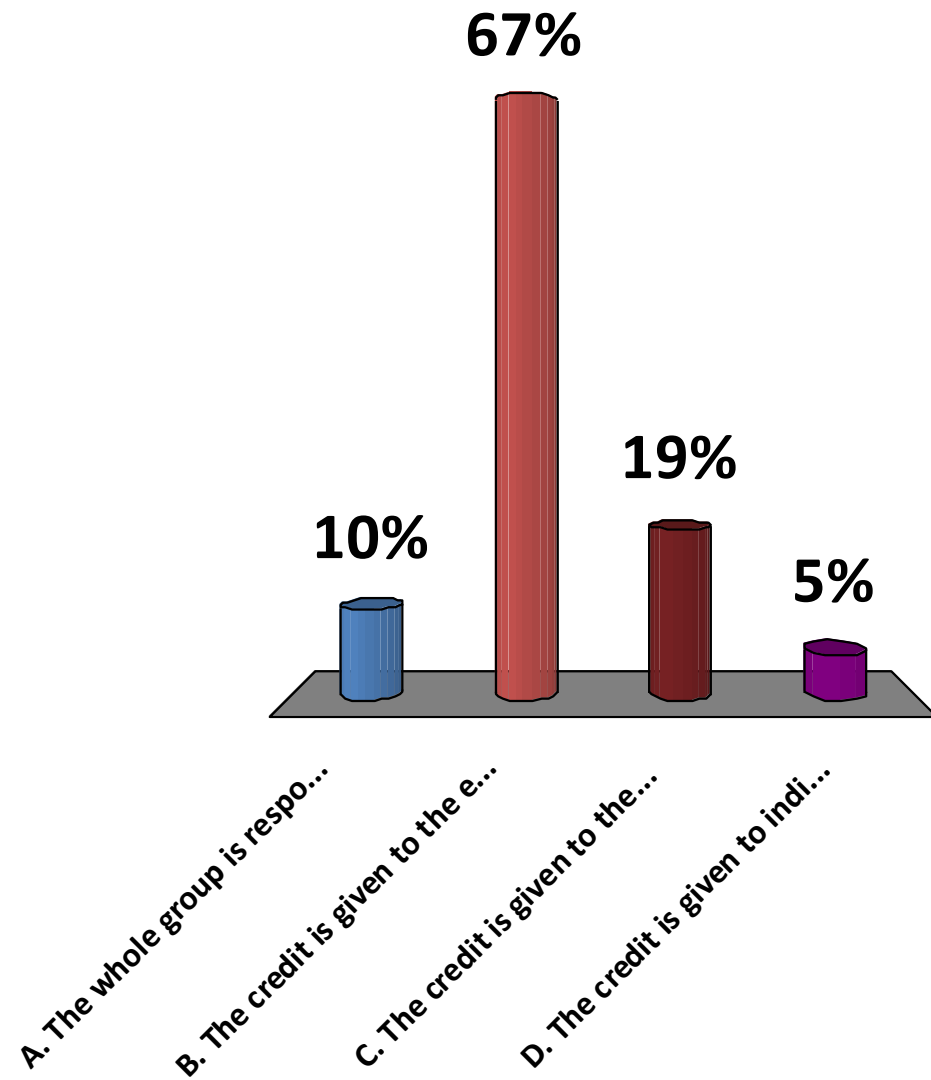
What is the BEST method for finding institutional partners to include in the IP?

- A. *A. Ask Only Government Officials since the Government is the biggest player*
- B. *B. Ask any institution interested in being a member*
- C. *C. Ask those development actors--big or small--whose strategic priorities and capabilities align with the priorities and goals of the IP*
- D. *D. Include only international agencies, but not any local-level agencies or actors*



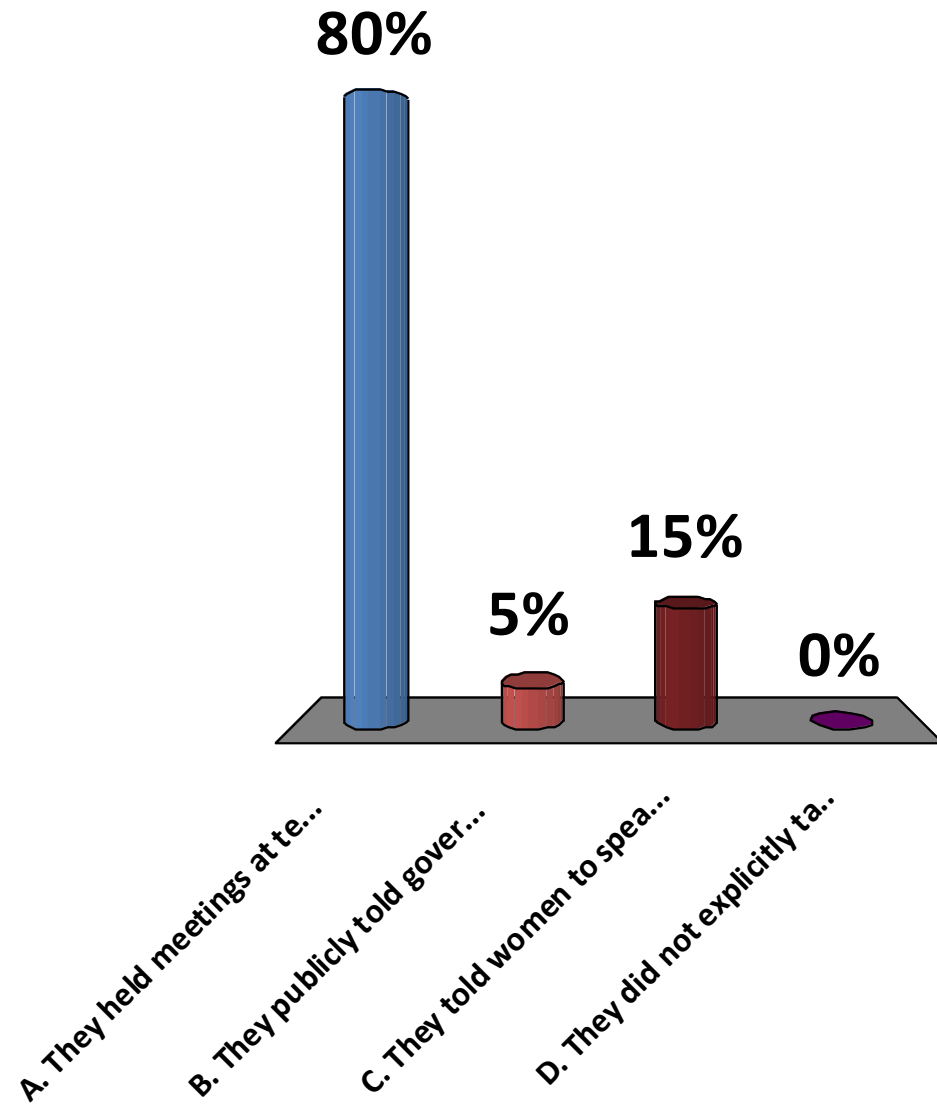
What do we mean by "group liability instead of asset liability"?

- A. *A. The whole group is responsible for the assets of the group*
- B. *B. The credit is given to the entire group based on joint liability and mutual assurances instead of to each individual separately based on individual assets*
- C. *C. The credit is given to the whole group based on the combined value of the group's assets*
- D. *D. The credit is given to individuals based on their own assets*



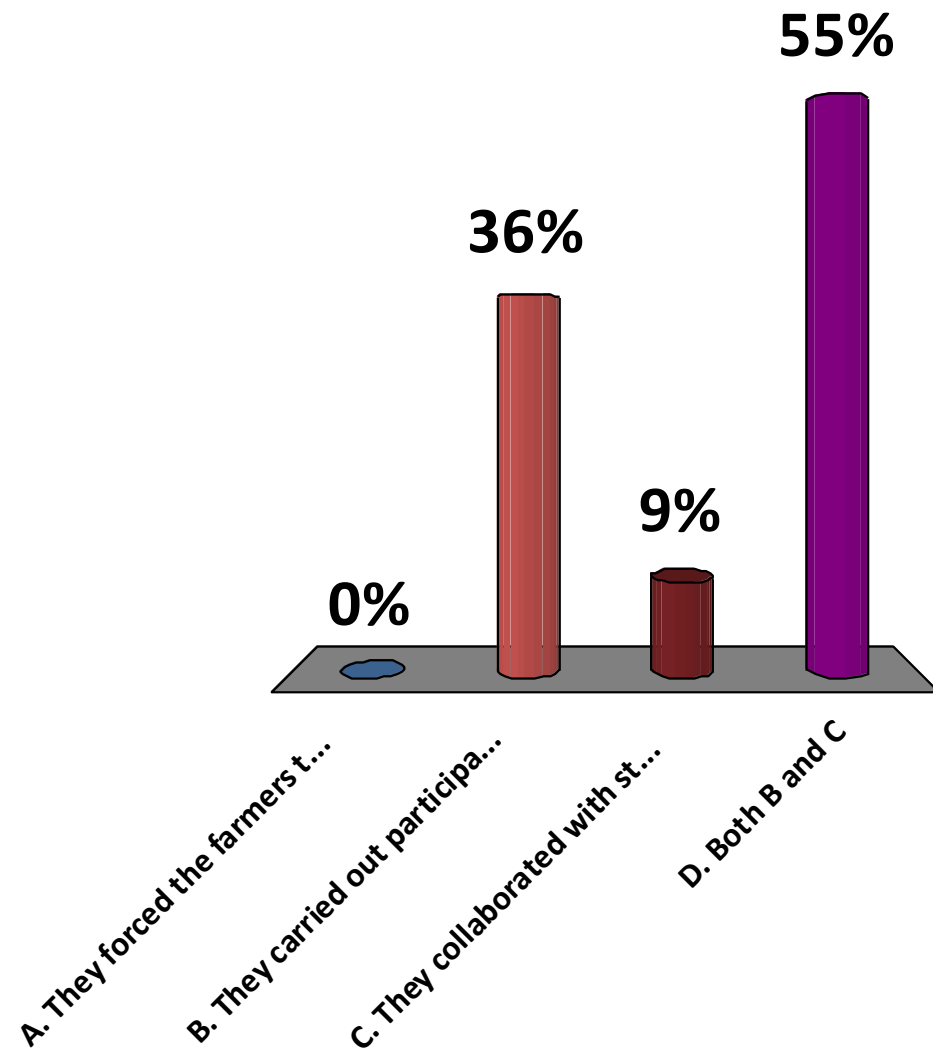
What steps did the MilkIT IP take to address distorted power dynamics?

- A. *A. They held meetings at temples or community halls, which offered women and small farmers a 'safe space' to voice their opinions*
- B. *B. They publicly told government officials not to "preach" to the farmers*
- C. *C. They told women to speak up regardless of who was present*
- D. *D. They did not explicitly take any measures to address the power dynamics*



What methods did the IP adopt to spread the use of feeding troughs and choppers?

- A. *A. They forced the farmers to use them*
- B. *B. They carried out participatory action trials and shared positive results from these at IP meetings*
- C. *C. They collaborated with stakeholders like NABARD and IFAD to implement subsidies on these devices*
- D. *D. Both B and C*



Results – what was the impact of MilkIT?

Increased Income, Employment & Savings

- Over 100 farmers earn anywhere between INR 600 to 6000 per month through milk sales.
- Most of this income goes to women to invest in their household, educate their children and buy better feed.
- 7 people--4 women and 3 men are directly employed in milk collection, transport and retail
- In the Sult region, over 100 women and their households are availing the use of dairy collection centers.
- As per an impact study in November 2014, families of those participating in IP meetings had 5 times more savings through milk sales than non-participating households.
- Over a 12 month period, farmers participating in IP meetings fed their animals improved forage for 50 days compared to 12 days for non-participating households.

Increased Communication between stakeholders

- The IP identified producer representatives, and communicated feedback of IP meetings back into villages through them.
- Women reported an unprecedented opportunity to communicate with representatives from other villages and with higher-level officers of stakeholder institutions.
- Stakeholder institutions also valued the IP as an opportunity to efficiently access and engage with larger groups of development-oriented smallholder producers through structured dialogue.

Did you pick up on most significant change (MSC) examples to enhance the impact stories?

- Devki Devi from Besarbagarh village said that “Now I earn more than 1500 rupees per month through transport of milk from my village to road. This income is helping me to get nutritious food for my kids and builds my confidence”.
- Mahesh Tiwari (Box 9.1)
- Remember that you found these very useful yesterday... So train yourself to look for opportunities to apply the ‘tools’ we covered yesterday!

Factors that contributed to Impact

- Desire of smallholder producers to generate income through dairy production
- Supportive institutional landscape
- Introduction of complementary technologies:

Desire of smallholder producers to generate income through dairy production

Three out of four clusters selected exhibited this desire.

One cluster decided that the social costs involved with increased milk sales would not justify the potential income benefits and dropped out.

Supportive institutional landscape

IPs need the support of other institutions and stakeholders including government bodies to adopt and share the technologies, interventions, resources and approaches identified by the IP.

The Case suggests that financial institutions had as significant a role in stimulating change as any other development organization.

This will likely hold true in many other situations where upfront credit and investment is required to grow assets or improve productivity.

Introduction of complementary technologies

The introduction of cross-bred cows enabled a huge boost in productivity, which showcases how beneficial it can be when active stakeholder institutions introduce complementary technologies, inputs and services.

Take home: Content Matters

- Institutional changes in milk marketing provided a major incentive for farmers to invest in feed and breed improvements despite the associated higher input costs.
- In regards to feeding simple interventions like fodder troughs and concentrate feedings, resulting in near-immediate benefits were more attractive to farmers initially than more complex packages with longer time horizons such as grass-land development.

Take Home: Process

- Actual changes differed considerably between the platforms, thus highlighting that the platforms should be left free to decide which interventions to prioritize.
- It is important to support interventions through consistent documentation if they are to have wider acceptance.
- It is crucial for IPs to enable farmers to have their voice heard, which will lead to more efficient development efforts.
- The longer-term effects of IPs are chalked down not to any specific intervention but due to better communication and collaboration of the various stakeholders.
- IP partners have identified certain key lessons from the projects and are changing their own activities and approaches, while investing in wider dissemination, thus creating massive out-scaling potential.

More information

The Enhancing dairy-based livelihoods in India and Tanzania through feed innovation and value chain development approaches (MilkIT) project was led by ILRI and financed by the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

Reports and more information is available at:
<https://cgspace.cgiar.org/handle/10568/4758>

Thank You

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Patron: Professor Peter C Doherty AC, FAA, FRS

Animal scientist, Nobel Prize Laureate for Physiology or Medicine–1996

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