A report on animal health resource centre managers' training in the HEARD project











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Acknowledgment

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Summary

Health of Ethiopian Animals for Rural Development (HEARD) is a European Union–supported project that is jointly implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture, the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), the Ethiopian Veterinary Association (EVA) and the bureaus of agriculture and livestock development in Amhara, Oromia and Somali regions. The project aims to increase sustainable livestock productivity and improve the marketing of livestock products. In line with the HEARD project intervention framework, ILRI and EVA jointly work to strengthen the competencies and incentives for veterinary service providers to deliver better and more rationalized animal health services.

The project supported establishment of animal health resource centres (AHRCs) as knowledge hubs to facilitate access to and utilisation of new knowledge and information on animal health services. The resource centres are equipped with digital devices, furniture and knowledge products.

An experiential and practical training was organised to capacitate AHRC managers on the promotion, operation, utilisation and sustainability of the resource centres. This will increase the role of the resource centres in capacity building and awareness creation for private (and public) animal health workers. The training programme is building towards the provision of continuing professional development modules and furthering the process of rationalizing veterinary service delivery.

As a follow-up on the training, a virtual learning group was created to facilitate learning and sharing among the AHRC managers. In addition, a coaching plan was developed to engage the managers on continuous reflection, sharing of experience and documentation of outcome stories.

Introduction

Access to new knowledge by animal health professionals through innovative learning and knowledge management methods is critical to improve animal health services. Following the experience of the Livestock and Irrigation Value Chains for Ethiopian Smallholder Farmers (LIVES) project in Ethiopia, the Health of Ethiopian Animals for Rural Development (HEARD) project supported livestock development offices at the district level to establish animal health resource centres (AHRCs). The aim was to increase availability of and access to new knowledge and information on animal health management.

The effectiveness of AHRCs requires capacity development of partners in the management and utilisation of the centres. To enhance the use of the AHRCs, the HEARD project organised skills-based training for AHRC managers from Amhara, Oromia and Somali regions on the use and management of the centres. Eight participants attended the training, held at the International Livestock Research Institute campus in Addis Ababa from 19–21 July 2021.

The training aimed to create an opportunity for AHRC managers to share experiences and good practices in the use and management of the centres and create networking among the managers for virtual support and collaborative learning.

Learning content

- Overview of knowledge management concepts, process and tools
- Purpose, facilities and services of AHRCs
- Responsibilities and required skills of AHRC managers
- Basic computer applications, networking, document sharing, file management, browsing the Internet, troubleshooting
- Operation and handling of digital camera, LCD projector and smart TV
- Record keeping and monitoring of AHRCutilisation
- Reporting and storytelling on the utilisation of AHRCs







The outcomes of the training were:

- Clarity and shared understanding created on the roles and competencies of AHRC managers
- Improved knowledge, skills and confidence created among AHRC managers to promote and manage AHRCs effectively
- A network of AHRC managers created for virtual support and collaborative learning and sharing
- Action plans developed to enhance the use and management of AHRCs

The training covered the following content:

Learning content

- Overview of knowledge management concepts, process and tools
- Purpose, facilities and services of AHRCs
- Responsibilities and required skills of AHRC managers
- Basic computer applications, networking, document sharing, file management, browsing the Internet, troubleshooting
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Opening session

Participants introduced themselves to one another in an interactive way, focusing on their exciting experiences with AHRCs. The session helped the facilitators establish rapport with the participants and prepare them for more interaction and learning in the course of the training.

The facilitators then asked the participants to identify their learning expectations for the training, individually as well as in groups. Having clear personal learning goals is important for participants to benefit as much as possible from the training. Participants were advised to review their learning expectations and monitor their learning progress in the course of the training.

Learning expectations of participants:

- Installation, networking, basic computer skills, troubleshooting, using digital devices
- Experience sharing and learning from one another
- Use of social media and virtual meeting tools
- Promotion (expansion and accessibility) and monitoring of utilisation of the centres

As can be seen from the learning expectations, participants focused on technology issues rather than people and process issues of the resource centres. In addition to knowledge and skills in the operation and use of digital devices in the AHRCs, it is important for the centre managers to acquire knowledge and skills to address people and process challenges.

In order for them to achieve their learning expectations, the participants identified the following as their learning responsibilities:

- Active participation
- Asking questions
- Sharing experiences
- Learning from peers

The facilitators also encouraged participants to keep daily learning logs and reflect on their key learning points using the following questions:

- What did I learn today?
- How will I use the learning in my workplace?

The facilitators motivated the participants by emphasizing the importance of their role as AHRC managers and what this means for animal health service delivery improvement.

A range of learning activities such as interactive discussions, buzz sessions, group work, recap sessions and practical sessions kept the training lively and engaging.

In addition, the training presentation slides, AHRC management guidelines and AHRC recording and monitoring guidelines were given to the participants to aid self-learning and knowledge application in the workplace.

Pre-training evaluation

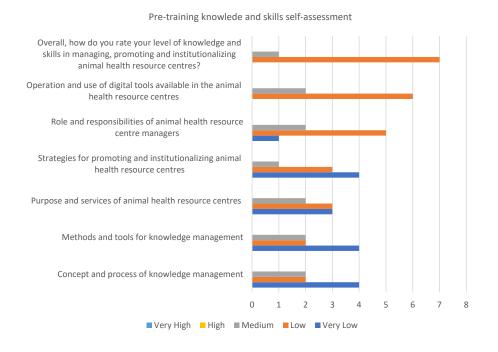
Before the start of the training, participants were asked to assess their level of knowledge and skills on each of the training topics.

The purpose of the self-assessment was to:

- Provide training participants with an idea of the level of knowledge and skills they already have in the training course before the training and how well they have performed in each training topic at the end of the training
- Provide trainers/facilitators with an idea of the different levels of knowledge and skills among training participants and devise ways to cater for individual learning differences
- Establish a baseline to measure the level of learning achievement of training participants at the end of the training

Overall, participants self-assessed their level of knowledge and skills in the management and operation of AHRCs as very low or low (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Results of pre-training knowledge and skills self-assessment.



Knowledge management: Concept, process and methods

In plenary, an interactive discussion was made on knowledge management to create common background for small group work. In the process, facilitators gave specific examples and related the discussion with the contexts of participants, who also shared their experiences and reflected on their learning and how they could apply the learning in their workplace.

Drawing on their experiences, participants brainstormed key words and phrases and gave examples of the people, process and technology aspects of knowledge management processes.

Brainstorming: Knowledge management concept

- · What is information?
- · What is knowledge?
- · How do we acquire knowledge?
- · How do we capture and share knowledge?
- What is knowledge management?
- · Why do we manage knowledge?
- · How do we manage knowledge?







Participants worked in small groups to assess the knowledge management situation in their organizations and describe the role of the AHRCs. Then they shared their experiences in managing AHRCs, the challenges they faced, the opportunities they had and what worked best for them.

The exercise helped them better understand the context and required conditions for enhancing the use and management of the resource centres.

Group work

- 1. How do you describe the knowledge management situation in your organization?
- 2. What is the role of animal health resource centres in promoting the learning and sharing culture of individuals and teams in your organization?
- 3. What challenges have you faced in promoting, managing and using animal health resource centres?
- 4. What opportunities exist for promoting and using the AHRCs?
- 5. What works best for you in promoting and using the AHRCs?







Summary of group work results

Situation of knowledge management in livestock development offices:

- · No systematic documentation of organizational knowledge resources
- Informal learning and sharing
- No systematic way to promote organizational learning

Role of AHRCs in promoting the learning and sharing culture of livestock development offices:

- Create access to new knowledge and information
- · Digital devices facilitate knowledge capturing and sharing
- · Facilitate learning and sharing through network discussions
- Develop digital skills of experts

Challenges faced in promoting, managing and using the resource centres:

- No operational budget
- · Intermittent internet connection or no connectivity at all
- Users focus on social media activities
- Inadequate reference and audiovisual materials

Opportunities for promoting and using resource centres:

- · High demand of users to use the centres
- Users' willingness to contribute to internet subscriptions
- · Availability of information and communications technology (ICT) experts
- Increased use of social media tools such as Telegram and WhatsApp in development sector

Good practices in promoting and using resource centres:

- Productive time use of users and experts
- Use of Telegram group to share information and engage animal health professionals
- The inclusion of office heads in Telegram group for animal health professionals, helping influence the office heads and promote the utilisation of the resource centres, e.g. at Bati AHRC
- Development of proposals to address local problems, e.g. at Dugda AHRC
- Mobilization of organizational knowledge resources, e.g. at Tehuledere AHRC
- Use of YouTube videos to develop skills of experts
- Use of AHRC facilities to produce and share reports

Vision, roles and competencies of AHRC managers

Having a basic understanding of the knowledge management process and what role AHRCs can play in promoting organizational learning culture, participants worked in small groups to articulate their vision of success for the AHRCs, identify conditions for the success of the centres and describe their roles and required skills.

Small group tasks:

- What is your vision of success for AHRCs?
- What conditions must be in place to fully utilize and sustain the AHRCs?
- What roles should AHRC managers play to promote and sustain the use of the centres?
- What knowledge and skills should AHRC managers have to effectively promote, manage and use the centres?

Summary of group results

Vision of success for AHRCs:

- Improved knowledge management culture of experts and organizations
- · Effective delivery of animal health extension services
- · Expanded use by multi-sectoral service users
- · Improved space and facility
- · Increased ownership, institutionalization and sustainability
- Knowledge-valuing community with increased demand for and capacity to use knowledge

Conditions for improved use and sustainability of resource centres:

- Awareness/promotion campaign about AHRCs to create demand for knowledge and information, e.g. through local media outlets or in meetings
- Sensitization of staff about the role of the AHRCs
- · Organizational ownership and commitment
- Full-time, competent and motivated AHRC managers
- · Continuous flow of relevant knowledge resources, such as reference materials, posters and audiovisual materials
- Broad resource mobilization strategies such as multi-sectoral collaboration, networking and linkage with development projects and fee-based services

- Roles of AHRC managers:
- Encourage teams to have regular sharing and discussion events
- Keep resource centres clean and tidy
- Encourage and support users to continually use resource centres
- Promote the centres in different ways, e.g. meetings, notice boards and celebration of knowledge days
- Monitoring and recording use of the centres

Knowledge and skills centre managers require:

- Interpersonal communication and relationship skills
- Record-keeping skills
- ICT skills
- Lobbying and advocacy skills
- Strategic planning skills

Recording and monitoring of AHRC utilisation

In an interactive plenary discussion, participants shared their experiences in monitoring and recording AHRC use.

Registry, monitoring and reporting on animal health resource centre utilisation

Small group work:

- Why is it important to keep registry (record) of users and monitor the utilisation of AHRCs?
- What parameters should be included in a user registry or AHRC utilisation monitoring format?
- What analysis and reporting format should we use to report on AHRC utilisation? What should go into this report format?
- What narrative structure should we use to tell stories about functional AHRCs?
- What challenges we might face in monitoring and reporting on the utilisation of AHRCs?







- Why to keep records and monitor AHRCs utilisation:
- Manage centre property properly (inventory and audit of materials)
- Keep good track of users and monitor performance of AHRCs
- Generate evidence on usefulness or relevance of AHRCs
- Identify challenges and take timely measures to enhance and sustain the use of AHRCs
- · Analyse trend and gaps in using AHRCs
- Promote value of the centres
- Manage influence
- Generate lessons or influence other sectors to establish resource centres

What to monitor:

- Type and purpose of use
- Type of users by gender, age range, discipline, position, sector, etc.

- Time, duration and frequency of use daily, a few days a week, weekly, fortnightly, monthly, etc.
- Trend in overtime use
- User feedback comments, observations and suggestions

To standardize the parameters in the recording and monitoring of AHRC use, a template was shared and discussed (Annexe 4).

Participants were then introduced to the idea of writing success stories about their AHRCs. They were new to the concept and practice of telling success stories.

Story writing about success of animal health resource centres

A good story has power to inspire, energize and move people to action.

- Make people feel
- Help you learn and improve
- Build learning culture
- Sha re your success
- Advocate for change
- Learn about what works and what does not
- Persuade or influence an audience
- Motivate change
- Inform others.







Using a simple narrative structure (Problem situation, Intervention, Outcomes, Evidence and Sustainability), the facilitators demonstrated a change story of an exemplary intervention to help participants make sense of what an outcome story is and how they can apply it in telling success stories of their AHRCs.

Participants were then encouraged to discuss what they were proud of in their AHRCs, identify a good practice and practise writing a success story about their AHRCs using the story narrative structure.

Operation and use of AHRC digital devices

The practical session was an exciting part of the training. A PowerPoint slide deck that covered broad information was shared to aid self-learning by the participants. The practical session followed these steps: Explain, Demonstrate, Practise, Reflect and Feedback.

After providing an overview presentation on digital devices and social media tools (Explain and Demonstrate) to create a shared understanding, the participants were asked to prioritize topics and agreed to practise on the following. Each participant was provided with a laptop computer and the participants practised in pairs.

PowerPoint:

- Create
- Insert picture, table, chart, weblink

Zoom:

- Download app
- Sign up
- Schedule meeting/invitations
- Explore

Excel:

- · Create sheet
- Manipulate cells
- Enter data
- Create chart

After the practice, participants reflected on their learning experiences using the following questions:

- What did I learn?
- How useful was it?
- What will I do next?

Review, reflection, action planning and evaluation

Results of the daily reflections were reviewed and added.

Key lessons learned:

- · What knowledge management is, why it is important and how to implement it
- Importance and role of AHRCs
- How to promote AHRCs and attract users
- · Role and skills of AHRC managers
- · Operating and handling of digital devices
- Documentation and record keeping of resource centres
- The power of sharing ideas with others through discussion
- Success story writing importance, structure
- Recording and monitoring filing, documentation

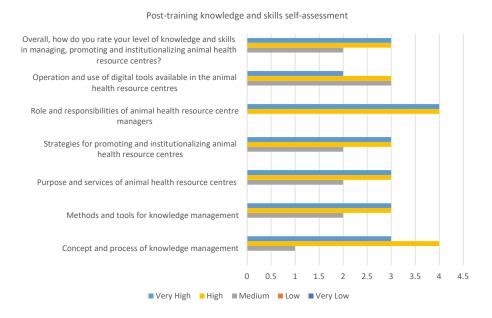
How to use the lessons learned:

- · Challenge analysis, strategy development and working with management
- · Opportunity analysis, promotion strategy and mindset change
- · Promotion strategies (brochures, meetings, seminars and banners) at office and other places
- Revise and update recording and monitoring system for organised data and reporting
- Start writing and developing stories
- Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat (SWOT) analysis of AHRCs
- Organise and manage different organizational knowledge resources
- · Organise training for staff and to inform management
- · Create ownership, accountable management systems and intersectoral promotion activities
- Link AHRCs and development agents through the use of tablets

Evaluation

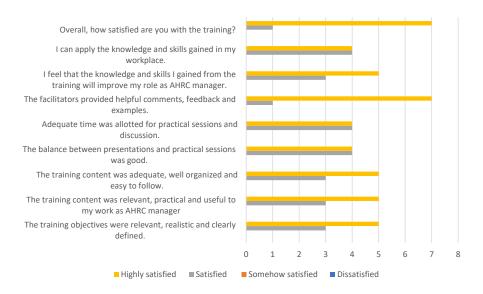
Participants were asked to self-assess their level of knowledge and skills gained in each training topic at the end of the training. After the training, overall, participants rated their level of knowledge and skills as high or very high (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Results of post-training knowledge and skills self-assessment.



A training feedback survey was also conducted to collect feedback from participants on the training process and methodology. Overall, participants demonstrated satisfaction with the training process (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Results of training feedback survey.



Post-training support

Going forward, a Telegram group was created to facilitate virtual coaching and provide continuous support for participants to implement their action plans. The group will serve as a virtual sharing and learning platform where the HEARD project facilitates peer learning among AHRC managers (Annexe 5).

Further reading

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- Lemma, M., Tesfaye, B., Gebremedhin, B., Hoekstra, D. and Tegegne, A. 2016. Knowledge management for marketoriented agricultural development: A strategic approach to enhancing agricultural knowledge centres in Ethiopia. LIVES project. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: ILRI.

Annexes

Annexe I: List of participants

#	Name	Gender	District	Region
1	Mohammed Hassen	М	Bati	Amhara
2	Marie Teshager	М	Banja	Amhara
3	Mohammed Eberie	М	Tehuledere	Amhara
4	Abdifatah Mohammed	М	Gode	Somali
5	Ahmed Yusuf Roble	М	Jigjiga	Somali
6	Mahdi Dayib Jame	М	Deghabour	Somali
7	Bekalu Adane	М	Banja	Amhara
8	Giragn Fole	М	Dugda	Oromia

Annexe 2: Programme of activity

Day I	Learning activity	Objective
8:30-9:00	Arrival and registration	Keep record of participants
9:00-10:00	Welcome, introduction, expectations, ground rules, training objectives, training agenda, pre-training knowledge and skills self-assessment	Create conducive learning atmosphere
10:00-10:30	Health break	Networking opportunity
10:30-11:00	Knowledge management – concept, process and methods	Create common ground for group work and plenary discussion
11:00-12:30	Group work: Situation of knowledge management in livestock development offices, challenges in promoting and using AHRCs, opportunities for using AHRCs, good practices in promoting and using AHRCs	Share and document experiences and good practices in promoting and using AHRCs
12:30-13:30	Lunch break	Networking opportunity
13:30-14:30	Plenary presentation, discussion and feedback	Document group discussion results and provide feedback
14:30-16:00	Assessment and discussion of AHRC situation and functionality	Current status and functionality of AHRCs
16:00-16:30	Health break	Networking opportunity
16:30-16:45	Wrap-up: Journaling of key learning points	Encourage reflection on key learning points

Day 2	Learning activity	Objective
8:30-9:00	Recap: Reflection and agenda of the day	Connect previous learning with learning agenda
9:00-10:30	Roles and skills of AHRC managers, conditions for fully using and sustaining AHRCs	Broaden thinking and practice of AHRC managers
10:30-11:00	Health break	Networking opportunity
11:00-12:30	Registry, monitoring and reporting on AHRC utilisation	Create clarity on the purpose and monitoring issues
12:30-13:30	Lunch break	Networking opportunity
13:30-15:00	Story writing about success of AHRCs	Encourage AHRC managers to document good practices and stories
15:00-15:30	Health break	Networking opportunity
15:30-16:30	AHRC equipment operation, use and handling, social media tools: explain and demonstrate	Develop skills of AHRC managers to operate digital devices and use social media tools
16:30-16:45	Wrap-up: Journaling of key learning points	Reflection of key learning points
Day 3	Learning activity	Objective
8:30-9:00	Recap: Reflection and agenda of the day	Celebrate and connect previous learning and agenda
9:00-10:30	Practical session: Social media tools, digital devices	Create opportunity for self-learning and practice
10:30-11:00	Health break	Networking opportunity
11:00-12:30	Practical session: Social media tools, digital devices	Create opportunity for self-learning and practice
12:30-13:30	Lunch break	Networking opportunity
13:30-14:30	Reflection and feedback on practical session	Document 'aha' moments, in-depth learning
14:30-15:00	Recap of main learning points, reflection, action planning, post-training support, evaluation	Develop action plans to encourage participants to apply the learning in their workplace

Annexe 3: Assessment of AHRC situation

Name of AHRC:
District:
Zone and region:
Name of AHRC manager:

Please assess the current situation of your AHRC based on the stated assessment parameters. This will help the HEARD project know the functionality situation of the AHRCs and identify strengths and challenges in the operation of the resource centres and devise appropriate mechanisms for addressing the challenges. Please read carefully, understand what is asked, and indicate your assessment by putting a tick in the appropriate options. It is also very important to explain your assessment in the comments section. Please provide key words or phrases that explain your assessment.

Thank you for your contributions.

Assessment parameter	Agree	Somewhat agree	Disagree	Comments
Room size				
The AHRC has enough space for users.				
Light				
The AHRC is well illuminated.				
Ventilation				
The AHRC has enough air circulation or well-ventilated.				
Location				
The AHRC is conveniently located and accessible which encourages regular use.				
Condition of AHRC room				
The AHRC room is clean and tidy with no cracks (walls, ceiling, floor, doors and windows).				
AHRC facility handling				
AHRC facilities (e.g., audiovisual materials, reference materials, computers, printers, etc.) are properly handled, dusted and covered.				
Reference and audiovisual materials (type, source and means of acquisition)				
The AHRC has adequate and relevant reference and audiovisual materials.				
Job description of AHRC managers				
As AHRC manager, I know what I am expected to do and how well I am expected to do it.				
Demand and accountability system (what it is, how it is implemented, and its effects)				
The agricultural development office has developed guidelines to promote and regulate the use of the AHRC.				
Encouragement and feedback				
I feel that my work as AHRC manager is valued by my colleagues and the management. I regularly receive feedback on what I do well and what needs to change.				
Allocation of operational resources				
The AHRC is mainstreamed in the planning and budgeting process of the agricultural development office. The necessary tools, equipment and supplies are available when and where they are needed.				
AHRC manager incentive and motivation				
My role as AHRC manager counts in job performance evaluations. I think that my work as AHRC manager is important or makes a difference.				
Knowledge and skills of AHRC manager	 			
As AHRC manager, I feel confident in my ability to perform the job successfully. I have the knowledge and				
skills I need to perform the job well.				

AHRC manager work		
I work full-time as AHRC manager.		
AHRC users		
The AHRC is open to all kind of users in the zone or district.		
Utilisation of AHRC facilities and services		
Generally, the AHRC facilities and services are fully utilized, and users are satisfied with adequacy and relevance of the services and facilities.		
Type of AHRC service use		
The internet is the most frequently used AHRC service.		
Use hours		
Most of the users use AHRC facilities and services during office hours.		

Annexe 4: Animal health resource centre logbook

AHRC name:	 	 	
AHRC manager: _			

Logbook instructions

The logbook is used only to monitor the utilisation of the AHRC and for project reporting purpose. It is meant to gather data for analysis by the HEARD project to generate evidence about the usefulness of the resource centres.

- I. Always write in pen.
- 2. Write date and time of use for every user.
- 3. Write the type of user:
 - a) Veterinarian
 - b) Para-veterinarian
 - c) Livestock expert
 - d) Development agent
 - e) Office head
 - f) Animal health team leader
 - g) Extension team leader
 - h) Livestock keeper
 - i) Other sector user (mention the sector and type of user)
- 4. Write the type/purpose of use for every user:
 - a) Reading hard copy/reference materials

- b) Using computer to watch audio-visual materials
- c) Using computer for preparing workplans and reports
- d) Using computer to prepare training materials
- e) Using computer for email
- f) Using the internet to search for information
- g) Using the internet to attend online training or webinar
- h) Using computer for sending or sharing reports or information
- i) Using AHRC for small group meetings
- j) Using AHRC for small group training
- k) Any other use (mention the use)
- 5. Scan and send the logbook by the end of each month to the HEARD project for analysis about the performance of AHRCs. Include your observation or evaluation of the use of the AHRCs and any suggestion for improvement. Use the report checklist below.

Report checklist:

In your evaluation, how has the AHRC been used in the month? What is your best moment?

What have you done to promote the use of the AHRC?

Were there any challenges?

What is your feedback/suggestion to improve the use of the AHRC?

AHRC user logbook

No	Date	Time in	Time out	Name of user	Type of user	Gender	Type/purpose of use

User feedback:

Dear user, please provide any feedback you may have about the services of the AHRC. What is good and what needs to be improved?

No need to mention your name. We only need for your suggestions to improve the services of the AHRC.

Annexe 5: AHRC managers' virtual training and coaching plan

Learning agenda	Learning points	Learning activity	Learning method and materials	Learning outcomes
Overview of animal health resource centres	What of AHRCs Purpose of AHRCs Equipment and facilities Functions and services of AHRCs Vision of success for AHRCs Conditions for the success of AHRCs	Introduce yourself. On the online learning and sharing platform, write briefly about yourself — who you are, what you do, your impression about AHRCs, what you expect from the virtual learning and sharing activities, etc. If you were to tell a friend about AHRCs, how do you describe AHRC? Why do we need AHRCs? What is the purpose of AHRCs? What functions or services do AHRCs provide? What is your overall impression about AHRCs?	Moderated Telegram group discussion and reflection Discussion summary Learning aid Examples AHRC managers' training and coaching materials Recorded PPT presentations on management of AHRCs AHRC operation and management guidelines	AHRC managers share experiences and have clarity about purpose and functions of resource centres AHRC managers articulate vision of success for AHRCs and define their role as managers to promote and use the resource centres effectively
Accessibility and utilisation of animal health resource centres	Types of AHRC users Use regulations and rules Promotion and value proposition of AHRCs Challenges facing AHRC managers Encouragement and supportive supervision	Who are the users of AHRCs? What regulations and rules govern use of AHRCs? How do you promote the services of AHRCs? What challenges do you face as AHRC manager? What support/encouragement do you get from supervisor/leaders and users?	Facilitated sharing and learning Discussion summary Problem solving support Job aids	AHRC managers have shared understanding about AHRC use regulations and promotion
Knowledge management	Information Knowledge Learning Knowledge management: what, why, how	What do the terms 'information' and 'knowledge' mean to you? Where do we get information and knowledge? What is learning? How do we learn as individuals or teams? Do organizations learn? How do we support organizational learning? How can AHRCs promote a learning culture? Can knowledge be managed? What is knowledge management? Why should we manage knowledge? What process does knowledge management involve? What methods and tools can be used to support knowledge management?	Facilitated sharing and learning Summary of discussion Key messages/lessons Job aid	AHRC manages get shared understanding about the role of AHRCs in promoting learning culture of individuals, teams and organizations

Annexe 6: The training process in pictures



Participants introducing one another



Participants in group work

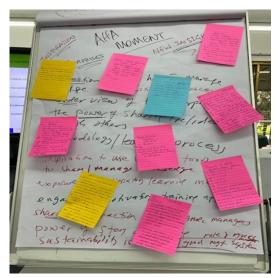




Group work presentation and feedback







Reflection and 'aha' moments

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