

**AGRICULTURAL INNOVATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT – A CASE
STUDY OF COMMUNICATIONS ABOUT CONSERVATION FARMING
IN KATETE DISTRICT**

BY

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requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Communication for
Development**

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

2011



DECLARATION

I Joyce Phiri declare that this report:

- a) Represents my own work;
- b) Has not been previously been submitted for a degree at this or any other University; and
- c) Does not incorporate any published work or material from another report.

Signed: J.P.

Date: 04.03.11

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APPROVAL

This report of *Joyce Phiri* is approved as fulfilling the partial requirements for the degree of Masters of Communication for Development by the University of Zambia.

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ABSTRACT

Zambia like other countries in the Southern Africa is faced with problems of food security due to decline in soil fertility, fodder shortage especially in the dry season, continuous cultivation without application of fertilizer or manure, increased soil erosion, soil exhaustion and low inherent soil fertility (Kwesiga and Beniast, 1998).

In the subsistence agricultural region of Eastern Zambia, less than 10% of the households have adequate supply of maize the staple food, throughout the year. A major constraint to increasing crop production in the area is poor fertility status of the soil. In order to address this problem, conservation farming was introduced as a technology for improving soil fertility. Farmers have been using this technology for a number of years now in the study area. This report has been undertaken to find out if farmers have improved crop yield in Kagoro/ Kafumbwe camps.

The rationale of the study is to analyze the effectiveness of communication strategies used in Conservation Farming. This problem is worth studying because there has never been such a study about Conservation Farming in Katete District. Therefore, this study will contribute to the body of knowledge on the importance of Conservation Farming in areas where there are declining agricultural production. It will also provide a forum for the farmers to express their views on the project in the study area and illustrate their expectations and frustrations as they adopt the alternative strategy to increase their productivity. The results will help Ministry of Agriculture and the extension workers on the communication strategies to use as innovations are being introduced.

For data collection, 100 questionnaires were prepared and distributed to the targeted audience. The respondents themselves filled in the questionnaires but for those that could not to read and write, the researcher read out and translated in the local vernacular while the researcher filled in the questionnaire as the respondent answered the questions. The researcher also used Focus Group Discussion, In-depth Interview and Observation.

The main aim of this study is to evaluate the impact of communication regarding Conservation Farming technology in increasing maize production in Kagoro village n Katete District. The specific objectives are to: evaluate the perceptions of farmers regarding the effectiveness to the communication strategies used by Agricultural Officers on the farming techniques, Find out the impact of adoption of Conservation Farming techniques in Kagoro village, determine the Agricultural Officer's communication strategies for reaching the targeted groups, Find out the problems farmers face that contribute to low crop yield, Examine the communication channels used by Extension Officers.

The main benefit of CF in Kagoro/Kafumbwe farmers is increased yield of crops especially maize. The study found that there is information flow between the farmers and the agricultural extension service providers. 64% of the respondents were visited frequently by the Extension officers, 31% were visited very frequently and 5% said were rarely visited. This means that the farmers had access to information that is relevant and useful to them from the Extension officers. The Agricultural Extension Officers are using a number of channels and approaches to disseminate information to Kagoro/Kafumbwe farmers.

TO MY LATE FATHER AND MOTHER

I dedicate this report to my late father Mr. Aaron Phiri and mother Mrs. Mary Phiri for bringing me up and their support towards my education to enable me have access to the higher level of education in the long run. May their Souls rest in Internal Peace.

I also dedicate it to my husband Herbert Mwiinga for allowing me further my education and the support he gave me during my time of study.

I also dedicate my work to my beloved children; Jacob, Herbert Jr, Betty and Nchimunya for the love they showed during this difficult time when I was undertaking my studies.