

AGRI-SERVICE ETHIOPIA

Strategies and Guidelines on Community Learning and Action

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1. Introduction

Agri-service Ethiopia (ASE) is one of the oldest national NGOs in this country. It has worked in the area of rural development since 1969, primarily with smallholder farmers in remote places of the country. Currently, ASE is implementing development program in six weredas of three Regional States; namely, Enabse Sar Midir and Tehuldere weredas in Amhara regional state; Berek, Goro & Gelana weredas in Oromia Regional State; and Amaro wereda in Southern Nations and Nationalities Peoples Regional States. Since its inception ASE's main thrust was community training and extension.

In accordance to the recent strategic changes of the organization, *Community Empowerment* has been officially adopted as the main institutional philosophy of ASE. In principle community empowerment has been the anticipated goal of the organizations ever since its establishment as many of the program components (mostly service delivery oriented) were designed to achieve community empowerment, in a sense that the living conditions of the people are improved as a result of improving access to several services and information. The recent change however is different because community empowerment is not only seen as a far reaching goal but also as a basic institutional function, which envisages programs formed by key activities that ensures community empowerment as an immediate output. In other words, ASE is consciously engaged in community empowerment processes with anticipated goals of bringing cultural and institutional innovation to contribute to sustainable development, poverty reduction and improved governance systems at local level. To achieve these goals, ASE adopted two important strategies. These include the development of Community Based Institutions (CBIs) and running Community Learning and action (CoLA) activities. These are indeed the overarching strategies of the organization, while several strategic documents that support the implementation of these core strategies are also developed and used.

This strategy document is basically on CoLA. It is not however only meant to produce a guiding framework on how to implement Community Learning and Action related activities, but it also contributes to the documentation of some of the previous experiences along this line. Indeed this will help to partly address the limitations of ASE in terms of documenting good practices of the organization. Because of this reason, this document has extensive coverage on the background chapter, in relation to some accounts of ASE history, brief notes on institutional learning, reflections on ASE training approaches and rationale for updating the previous approaches of ASE. In addition, a section is included on theory to introduce the reader, primarily ASE staff, with the recent thinking of extension, research and development, in general. This section also tries to link the theoretical discussions with the practical experiences of ASE and provides a theory guided framework for the field staff. Finally, the main text includes extensive coverage on what CoLA does mean to ASE, the major components of CoLA, detailed accounts of Community Learning Forum (CoLF, one of the major components of CoLA), the operational guidelines of CoLF and a section on Community Innovation and Development Fund. This document has also envisaged several methodological guidelines that help to run Community Learning Activities in practice.

2 Background

2.1 Brief accounts of institutional learning

Historical accounts of ASE's Agricultural extension and development works indicate that the organization has passed through five distinct phases, while the sixth one is ongoing. The initial phase was known as correspondence education and the most recent one is Community Empowerment Program (CEP) phase. Chronologically, Face to Face training, Action Oriented Training, Integrated Rural Development program and Integrated Food Security Program phases were adopted by ASE following the initial phase and just before the current one, showing a pattern of institutional learning over the last four decades. Changes took place because of the keen interest of the organization to learn from own experiences and as a result of the shifts in rural development paradigms that took place at national and global level. Brief description and some of the key lessons of the various phases are given below.

As mentioned above, the first phase is known as a period of *correspondence education*, which took place in 1969 - 1976. For ASE, this was also a period of establishment and development towards a fully-grown farmer-training institute in the country. By that time, the main functions of the organization include distance education, through adaptation and translation of INADES-formation training materials from French to local language and conducting experimental work on these materials. Target groups of the educational program were volunteer and literate farmers in the southern region and the focus of the courses was on Agriculture, Health and Home economics. Print media was the main instrument of the educational program and some state agencies, who were involved in rural development works, like the Wollita Agricultural Development Unit (WADU) were also close partners of ASE in the delivery of the correspondence education programs.

The second phase is referred to as *the face-to-face training program*. This phase took place in 1977 - 1986. The logic that drove ASE to change its approach from correspondence education programs to the face to face training was that the organization has drew an important lesson that illiterate people (By then, this accounts to approximately 90% of the target population) may learn more effectively on face to face training mode than the correspondence approach, which was basically designed for literate community members or to those families who could use their literate children to read the messages in the course materials to them. Although the face-to-face training was introduced as institutional innovation to ASE, the correspondence education initiative has also continued to exist quite for long period, being delivered as a sideline activity, along with the newly designed face to face training programs.

Upon introducing the new approach, ASE had consolidated its former Programs and also made changes on its organizational set up, to accommodate the needs and demands of the new target groups (mainly illiterate farmers in this case) as well as to respond to the lessons drawn from the different strategies tested during the first phase.

Some changes had also taken place on the program contents and implementation strategies, such as integration of face-to-face training with the distance education approach, deployment of field workers, introducing the use of Rural Radio forums (RRF) in collaboration with Wolita Agricultural Development Unit/WADU and the Ministry of Education.

The third phase covers the period between 1987-1996. During this period, *Action Oriented Training Program* (AOTP) became the main development intervention of the organization. This time ASE has grown both in terms of staff and area coverage. Experiences of the first and second phases have taught ASE: the "training alone approach" of the previous phase could not go much beyond introducing new ideas to farmers. The programs failed to make technologies adequately available to the rural families. It has also apparently failed to develop the capacity of the farmers' to access and use new technologies, which is very instrumental in improving agricultural production and productivity. This was mainly because of the extreme poverty of the people, unavailability of technologies in near distances and absence of credit facilities to the rural poor. The purpose of introducing the Action-Oriented Training Approach was therefore to overcome these limitations. The AOTP approach was still characterized by provision of group focused training for men and women (as the preceding phase does); mainly on agriculture, health and home management. The new element added to the former training model was that all programs were supported by demonstration of new technologies and farmers were also encouraged to adopt them. As part of the extensive demonstration works (in terms of number of participants), ASE was providing free handouts of technological inputs, especially to the poor families who may deserve that kind of attention. During this period, ASE has also showed growth in terms of areas of operation and a need arises to reorganize the programs under regional structures, so as to ease communication, coordination and management. Accordingly, ASE has opened regional coordinating offices including, followed by deployment of core staff to these offices.

The fourth Phase (1997 - 2000) was known as a period of implementing *Integrated Rural Development* as a program approach. The previous phases created opportunity for ASE to learn that the socio-economic problems of the rural people was oversimplified, to the extent that transfer of agricultural technologies to some rural families could change the picture of poverty in the rural area. The problems were rather very complex which goes beyond addressing the gaps in agricultural technologies. The causes were also recognized to be highly interconnected, in which case chains of problematic situations exist and these demand chains of appropriate and diversified interventions. This lesson drove ASE to launch three integrated rural development programs for 13 years. These programs were financed by Oxfam NOVIB of the Netherlands and EED of Germany. During this period, ASE has modified the previous development objectives and strategies. Nevertheless, the main objective still remains the same, enhancing the problem solving capacity of the community through training and extension, being the overarching one. In this phase, ASE has introduced a "revolving fund system" to help the vast majority of the rural poor access new technologies on a sustainable basis. Paradoxically, the concept of free handout of inputs was gradually dying out, although the legacy has had tremendous effects for quite

long period, even after a full-fledge introduction of the revolving fund system took place. At a later stage, ASE has introduced a more organized saving and credit systems to help the people diversify their livelihood sources and reduce dependence of the rural poor on external funds.

The defining characteristic of the Integrated Rural Development Programs (IRDP) was however its emphasis on diversified and interlinked program interventions. The programs started by conducting extensive study using PRA as a participatory tool, to make sure that the needs of the people are rightly addressed and the knowledge of the local community are effectively captured. This approach helped ASE to identify key economic and social challenges of the people and to design integrated projects that respond to the comprehensive and complex problems. Given to the complexity of the socio-economic challenges, "training alone" approach and getting restricted to small scale agricultural interventions on transfer of technology mode; were found less relevant and less effective. Therefore micro and macro projects were identified and classification of the projects was simply made based on the size of investment that goes to the projects. For example, activities such as small scale poultry production, Bee keeping, Forage production, on farm trial and introduction of improved seeds production, rural artisans etc were considered micro projects while activities like forestry, soil and water conservation; rural water supply, community health, credit and saving etc, which tend to receive bigger investment, thereof considered macro projects. The other important feature of this phase was that, taking in to account the issue of gender as an important development challenge; the organization has deployed and assigned male & female extension agents at grass root level. The issue of gender was therefore adopted as a guiding principle of the organization before 30 years.

Training issues were also categorized in to two, including General Awareness Raising Training (GART), which focuses on social issues and Skills Development Training (SDT), which address both agricultural and non agricultural skill development needs. This period was also characterized by introducing Village Level Development Promoters (VLDPs) in to the extension system. The introduction of VLDPs was recognized to ease extension communication as farmer extension agents could better articulate the needs of the community as well as pass messages to farmers more effectively than the formally trained extension workers do.

The fifth phase, which is also referred as *Integrated Food security program*, took place in 2001-2007, and this phase has adopted several important features of the previous phases, particularly those of the integrated rural development program. The major distinctive feature of this phase was that the focus of the program intervention was on food security related activities and the area of operation was, accordingly, in those places where food security was a major problem, which seriously affects the livelihood of the people and well being of the environment. Two major events took place at the end of the IRDP program phase and beginning of the food security program phase. These are:

- 1) A phasing out assessment was conducted on the IRDP programs that have been implemented in three places during the period 1997-1999. The assessment result

suggests that ASE has managed to address the major problems of the community in the IRDP program areas, in a service delivery mode, but because of the long existence of the organization in those places, signs of dependence were increasingly showing up. The phasing out assessment was a well thought through experience of the organization and the outputs of the study influenced ASE management to move out of the IRDP weredas to new operation areas, having gone through a consolidation period of one year in the IRDP program areas. Following to the consolidation period, ASE opened a one-person office in the old program areas to deal with outstanding issues and to organize the action groups initiated in the IRDP phase in to legally registered farmer cooperatives.

2) The second major event that took place in year 2000 was that ASE has conducted a strategic plan exercise for the first time. This exercise helped ASE to identify its values and good experiences as well as to discern the major limitations of the organization. Just to mention few:

a) ASE has learned - its track record, as well as opinions of its nearest stakeholders, suggests that ASE's history is a history of community training and extension; where as, the institutional attention paid by ASE to capitalize on this experience so that to become a robust organization in community training and extension works at national level was low. The stakeholders also recognized that no other indigenous institution is involved in the country in a professionally managed community training programs at similar scale and intensity ASE was trying to do, despite of the fact that the need for non-formal adult education is extremely high in the country. This finding was indeed the basis for the establishment of the current Community Learning and Capacity Development (CLCD) department, which is spearheading the activities that lead to becoming a center of excellent in community learning and action.

b) The second important issue that came out of the study was that ASE's intervention in the previous years was mainly in the surplus producing weredas of the country, while more than 240 weredas of the country have been reported to suffer from serious food security problems, one of the reasons being mismanagement of natural resources. This was therefore the main reason for ASE to make a shift from the IRDP approach in to the food security approach, in which case the issue of natural resource management that include soil and water conservation, development of irrigation facilities and development of rural water supply structures were considered to be some of the key interventions that support the major food security functions such us crop improvement, livestock production, saving and credit and several community training activities on social and technical topics.

c) Thirdly, in the IRDP phase rural institution development was considered as a vehicle of development in ASE. Apparently, hundreds of training and extension groups were organized in each program area. However, the assumption that a robust community organization may simply emerge at the end of the IRDP phase - out of the extension action groups which did not receive attention on matters of organizational development; was oversimplified and wrong. ASE was paying tremendous attention to technical interventions on agriculture, health, water supply and other natural resources

management activities during the IRDP phase. But it had no either any strategy or a well thought community institution development programs during this phase, although the action groups, which were temporarily organized for extension and training activities, were expected to form apex community organizations at the end of the program. This action groups were wrongly expected to manage community development initiatives even after the phasing out of ASE. This provided a great lesson to ASE that community institution building surely guarantees sustainability of program interventions of NGOs like ASE, but this may have a meaningful finishing, if the organization pays significant attention to develop the community organizations not at the end of the program period, but starting from the first day of its intervention. Secondly, ASE learned that community institution development is not just like any of the activity in the service delivery approach. But it demands a sharp turn in to a new paradigm, which assumes that having received a capacity development supports, the community institution it self will be on the drivers seat to deliver the services the people may require through mobilizing its own assets or through influencing primarily the state but also other actors who can support provision of the basic services. This again demands a complete shift in the attitude and approaches of the staff and management, who have long been working on the service delivery modality.

d) Fourthly, the level of organizational development ASE has already reached brought-in the issue of decentralization as an important change in organizational management. Accordingly, the new strategic plan document suggested reducing the program coordination roles of the head office and providing more leverage to the field office to enjoy a full right of coordinating own programs and budget. Unlike to the previous structure the new program offices of ASE were also expected to have qualified field staffs that need to depend less on the head quarters for technical, financial and administrative works. On the other hand, the role of the head quarter was restricted to developing new policies and strategies, research, fund raising, capacity development, program development, program monitoring and evaluation etc.

The current phase, which started in 2007, was known as *community empowerment program*. This program approach builds on the previous experiences of ASE but also paid greater attention to over come the limitations identified in the previous phases, through capacity development approach, which leads to community empowerment. The struggle between abandoning the service delivery concepts (transferring this mandate to community organizations) and fully adopting the community empowerment paradigm as a guiding principle of the organization, appears to be the main challenge at this phase of institutional transformation. Despite of all efforts made by ASE at different levels to get quickly familiarized with the new concept and to demonstrate real behavioral changes of the staff on the same sprit, the legacy of the service delivery approach is some times observed affecting the formulation of new programs, progress monitoring as well as reporting styles of ASE. On the other hand, encouraging changes are noticed on the side of the community and on the level of understanding of the field staff to see the Community Based Institutions as self-standing and sustaining development organizations. Nevertheless, the issues of "dependence" of the CBIs on ASE staff and resources as well as the issue of ensuring

financial sustainability for the CBIs are still critical discussion agendas within the organization.

The main objective of the new approach is to ensure that the technical and institutional capacity of the community reaches to a level that enables the local people manage own development affairs so that to achieve improved livelihood, sustainable environmental management and improved governance system. The expected main results are apparently 1) to see the local people demonstrating technical competences and behavioral changes to manage ASE supported programs and new initiatives of their own 2) to see them claiming own rights as organized body and positively influencing plans and practices of the local government and non governmental institutions so that to persuade them respond to their interest and priorities 3) to see the CBIs as a fully grown organizations with advanced management and administration systems when compared with similar farmer organizations in the rural settings and 4) to see the CBIs creating appropriate and effective linkages with those actors who can genuinely support their initiatives as well as with market actors who can play important role in improving their livelihood . To achieve these results ASE has designed strategic direction, which include core functions such as:

Community learning and action

- Agriculture, Natural Resources and Social Issues/infrastructure, gender, HIV/AIDS and conflict,

Empowerment of Communities and Local Institutions

- Supporting participatory development,
- Supporting Communities Based Institutions,
- Support the formation of other economic institutions that strengthen the works of the CBIs
- Identify and develop social networks, values and norms of the local community
- Capacitating local government institutions,

Participatory Research and Development

- Support identification and promotion of local innovations/indigenous knowledge
- Facilitate Participatory Innovation Development,
- Generate empirical evidences on selected themes for policy lobby and advocacy,
- Facilitate systematic learning on program approaches and strategies

Networking and Advocacy

- Engaging in policy advocacy and lobbying at all levels on selected themes
- Initiate and drive networks relevant to ASE mission and approaches
- Learn and adopt new ideas from others

The department of CLCD is responsible to oversee the implementation of most of the core functions including, community learning, empowerment of communities and local institutions and Participatory Research and Development. The department is also expected to draw lessons on key issues of the empowerment process so that to improve organizational learning and shape the strategic directions through time. Other Strategy documents such as formation and strengthening of Community Based Institutions (CBI), participatory research and development (the issue of PID is not included; so needs update), community education are already developed and introduced to ASE.

The main purpose of preparing this strategy document is therefore to provide detailed guideline and directions to the staff and management of ASE in the area of executing Community Learning and Action.

2.2. Reflections on ASE Community Training approaches

The classical way of organizing community training in ASE was characterized by a group approach, through forming some times separate groups and often mixed sessions of both sexes. The development agents meet with farmers every 15 days and training is delivered on the basis of the priority topics, mainly set by the trainers. Lecture was the most common approach of training and posters and flip charts are some times used to support the program. Those who attended a year-long training program are supposed to graduate, thereby advised to form action group (extension groups) of their choice. The one-year training (on average) was a prerequisite for the farmers to join the action groups. In this action groups intensive training is basically offered on specific topics but they are often considered as extension groups because farmers received extension advises for long time on how to access inputs, overcome practical challenges and access markets. Most often, bee keeping, poultry, vegetable production and local level seed production groups were known as extension groups in ASE operation areas. Local level seed production and beekeeping activities were mainly the choices of the men while vegetable production and poultry were for women. ASE provided a kind of revolving fund to the action groups to help them buy technological inputs. Each action group had its own leaders and those leaders were mainly responsible to collect the loans taken by the members of the action groups, some times in cash and often in kind. The technological inputs collected back from the users were used to be redistributed to new comers who just have finished the one year training program (a kind of common course mainly on social issues) and join the action groups of their choices. Although there were some variations from program office to program office, this was the typical framework of the community training and extension approach of ASE during the IRDP and IFSP phases.

Changes on this approach were made basically to overcome the limitations of the framework and secondly to improve it through buying new ideas from other sources. Most of the limitations and the quest for the new ideas are described in the following section, but the major ones include; lack of integration among the activity although they have complementary functions, workload of development agents and busy schedule of ASE client farmers as they were expected to take part in too many activities initiated by ASE and the office of agriculture, the training approach was less participatory often using lecturing as a major method of the training program, farmers capacity to innovate and do research was not duly considered, the financial support to the training, extension and research activities was sustainable and it was not easy to follow up impacts because of lack of attention and complexity of the program..

One of the major changes ASE has introduced during the IFSP phase was integration of the Farmer Field School (FFS), PTD/PID and FAL approaches, to the classical ASE training approach. The FFS approach is a discovery oriented learning approach of

farmers based on agro ecological analysis and use of indigenous knowledge; which is believed to have some results in challenging known problems. Although it was FAO who introduced the approach and spread it all over the world, ASE has got practical lessons from Save the Children UK in North Wollo, when one of the senior staffs of ASE paid a visit to the project area on a mission. Upon return the staff organized a field trip for quite a big group of ASE, who were drawn from all the program areas of the organization. This trip was organized as part of the Participatory Technology Development (PTD) program of ASE, which was, by that time a pilot project financially supported by CTA (**Center for Agricultural development**). The PTD approach was a partnership of farmers, extension workers and scientists to develop technologies jointly. This was indeed a new approach to ASE and has been tried in all program areas, side by side with the formal training approaches. Five PTD projects were known by that time across all ASE program offices. The visit paid to save the children UK project area was therefore considered to strengthen the farmers researching capacities and collective learning culture. Following the visit, ASE has organized a 10 days training program for its field staff on FFS, at Enebse program office. Responsible project officers and DAs were drawn from all program offices and attend the training. At the end, some pilot kebeles were selected mainly in Enebse Sar Midir wereda to try the new ideas. After some time a group of 5 ASE staff were send to Kenya to attend a course organized by IIRR, in collaboration with FAO-Kenya on participatory (Farmer-led extension) extension. In this course FFS was one of the subjects dealt and this session happened to be the most interesting part of the course. The field visit to the rural areas where FFS was put in practice was even more inspiring. The 5 staff group from ASE was expected to write a plan of action at the end of the program. Extra efforts were also made to contact the people from FAO-Kenya, to organize a more extended training course for ASE field staff in Ethiopia. This contact has bear fruit at the end and a trainer from Kenya came to Ethiopia to offer a course for 11 days in 2004. This course was organized at Bahir dar to the relevant ASE and counter government staff. This was the moment ASE staff came together to make a logical mix of the classical ASE training and the other new approaches such as PTD and FFS.

As a side line activities, there were several developments in ASE, some of which were very pertinent to research, extension and education works. The former experience of ASE on PTD was further developed in to a new approach called PID. PID is in principle similar to PTD. The major difference is that the entry point in the case of PID was not just an agricultural problem identified by farmers (like the case is true for PTD), but local innovations of farmers, which may inspire other farmers and experts to develop and share it to the wider community in a participatory fashion. ASE has invested a lot to promote the idea of PID not only at organizational level but also in the systems of other state and non state actors who are involved in research, extension and education functions in Ethiopia. This was done as a result of supporting the establishment of a national platform known as Prolinnova-Ethiopia, which was spearheading the promotion of local innovation in ecologically oriented agriculture and natural resource management in Ethiopia. ASE is one of the founders as well as the home base of the platform. The second important development was in the area of adult education. ASE in collaboration with DVV (German adult education program in

Ethiopia) was implementing a Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) program in Enebebe program area. This program was different from the classical literacy program in that the focus was on functional activities of the community to teach the people how to write and read. For example if seed bed preparation is one of the important agricultural practices common to the people, the teaching process will take in to account this issue as a learning agenda to teach farmers read and write the term more functionally.

ASE's experiences on PID and FAL were therefore critically considered along with the formulation of the modified learning framework at Bahir dar. Finally, the good elements of ASE classical training approach, the FFS approach, the PID approach and FAL were considered as the most important pillars (all in one modality) of the new framework. The staffs have agreed to try the new framework for about one year by selecting pilot kebeles in their respective working weredas since 2004. After one year, one of the ASE staffs was sending for further training to Larnstien University, the Netherlands. He joined the training, extension and education course and his specific area of research interest was FFS. His master's degree research was therefore to assess the effectiveness of the modified FFS extension approach (the newly developed ASE community learning framework) as compared to the classical training approach, which was widely implemented apart from the 12 pilot kebeles. This research was also aimed at identifying a basic ground for reformulation of ASE's community training and extension strategy.

In a nut shell, the research findings indicated that the modified FFS extension approach has a significant advantage over the classical ASE's community training and extension strategies since it is farmer centered and has a holistic approach to address the economic, environmental, social and institutional needs of the members. Moreover, the approach enhances indigenous knowledge, increases innovativeness of farmers, builds social interaction among the members, and effectively facilitates learning process. However, the limitations of the modified FFS extension approach mostly lie on the implementation of the working modality because of lack of guideline and staff orientation. The capacity of the field staff in participatory learning methods was also low and reciprocally this greatly affects the pilot project. The thesis, finally suggested reconsidering some of the working modality of FFS such as identification criteria of farmers, area coverage, number and type of activities to be treated per session, length of a session, and setting a reasonable time bound for the trainees to get them graduated.

Therefore, the modified FFS approach, which has been on pilot testing for about one year was found to provide answers to most of the limitations of the former approach, with the addition of some new dimensions that can bring-in new values to ASE programs. The way it is reformulated in ASE context was new and this demands close monitoring and a continuous assessment of the approach so that to develop it as a model which can be used by diverse actors working in similar situations and with the same intentions or goals. The same study also revealed that the activities performed in the pilot kebeles of the modified FFS program did not match with the traditional FFS programs implemented elsewhere. To that effect, assisted with different literatures and physical observations, analysis was made to compare and contrast similarities and

differences between the principles, philosophy and activities envisaged by the modified FFS (piloted by ASE) and the classical FFS approaches experienced elsewhere. At the end, it was found sensible and more self-explanatory to rename the modified FFS under pilot test in ASE as Community Learning Forum (CoLF). Because the forum is expected to accommodate diverse learning agendas which try to address all the social, economic, environmental, human right and other issue which the rest of the world is paying emphasis to. The CoLF is indeed one of the most critical strategic approaches considered in this document.

2.3. Rationale

ASE believes that learning is a lifetime experience as long as human interaction and communication continues to exist. ASE also believes that learning by hunting new ideas/approaches from external source (professionals, experts, researchers etc) could not provide always a miracle bullet to solve the new challenges the organization may face. Reflecting on and investigating own experiences in a learning mode and appreciative spirit is rather the most important procedure that should come first, before embarking on new concepts and experiences to add-on. It is always safer to start with the good works of own experiences and build on it, through learning from others, such as professional institutions, experts, researchers or peer groups. In the previous section of this strategy document, enough has been already said about the positive developments, good values and institutional lessons ASE has benefited from, in the past decades. This section is therefore focusing to briefly deal with the limitations ASE need to address, there by the rationales why the development of this strategy document is justified.

All the way through the history of ASE, community training and extension remains a key function of the organization, although some changes were made every now and then, based on the outcomes of organizational learning and changing situations. In the IRDP and IFSP programs, though the adopted strategies have yielded positive results, certain limitations, particularly in the area of community training and extension as well as community organization and financing were observed. These include;

- Extension is conceptualized in ASE basically as communication of information to help farmers make sound decisions on issues that affect their lives and their environment. Technology adoption, making agricultural inputs accessible and available, making financial opportunities possible and accessible, improving farmers' access to market and supporting farmers to improve their negotiation power through getting them organized and creating the right linkages with relevant actors are the key dimensions of the type of *EXTENSION* ASE is most interested on. In the past, although ASE has dealt with most of the functions mentioned here above, they were not adequately addressed and not clearly articulated in terms of providing written guidelines to the staff. The role of the community learning groups was mainly known for its education function. It was not seriously considered as a departure for initiating and developing Community Based Institutions of the present day model. It was not also developed to serve as an important center of information sharing and knowledge house in relation to accessing inputs and various technologies, accessing financial supports, identifying,

testing, developing and adopting innovations as well as learning about market and marketing phenomena. It is important to reorganize ASE community training approach to accommodate all these functions instead of serving as a classical teaching centre. These components need to be seen as a holistic but also stand alone elements, which are strongly integrated activities that lead towards achieving same goal.

- ASE has long been involved in community learning and education works. Documentation of those experiences is indeed very important as it provides opportunity for those who are interested to conduct research, develop strategy and learn new ideas etc. So far, two documents 1.) on ASE's community training and education strategy 2.) 30 years experiences of ASE on training and education are made available for such purposes. Capturing the recent experiences of the organization through building on previous lessons is therefore another way of enriching ASE documentation.
- ASE's extensive and ambitious intervention on training, extension, education and participatory research activities made the field staff, particularly the development agents too busy and overloaded. Because they are expected to deal with several action groups organized in line to these important initiatives. In ASE, a single development agent was expected to handle, at any one time, more than three training groups (on social issues and skill development trainings), several (on the average three) extension groups such as on bee keeping, poultry, local seed production, (the number increases based on the extension activities envisaged in the particular program office), several mass education activities (market place, churches and other social gatherings) and some groups of farmers who are involved in participatory research activities. On top of such an extensive group based responsibilities, the development agents were also expected to organize and facilitate soil and water conservation activities, institutional development works of farmer organizations (CBI), linkages with Kebele and weredas level government staff and agencies, facilitating access for saving and credit opportunities, conduct home and farm visits to the farmers involved in training, extension and research activities, follow up of the works of social infrastructures such as health posts, water development facilities, schools and other structures such as stores, field office buildings etc, attend monitoring meetings with ASE supervisors and senior staff etc.

The range of activities are already too many but in accordance to the recently introduced CBI approach, it is hoped that some of the responsibilities will be transferred from ASE development agents to the CBIs, provided that application of ASE's strategy document on CBI development goes in the right direction. Nevertheless, even if the CBIs take some of the responsibilities, the remaining works are still too many to handle unless they are reengineered to improve effectiveness and efficiency of the field staff. Therefore 1) in order to prevent farmers from being unnecessarily busy with ASE initiated works 2) to unload some of the responsibilities of the development agents; apparently giving them a breezing space to think strategically and engage in innovative activities, 3) In order to make things very easy to follow up and monitor, reorganizing the field works in a manner that would help to avoid dilution of efforts, energy and resources is a right strategic intervention and

timely action. In other wards, ASE need to develop a sound methodological approach that may accommodates General Awareness Raising Education (GARED), Skill Enhancement Training (SET), Participatory Action Research (PAR) activities, Agricultural extension activities, and Adult Literacy- "all in one"; so that to improve quality and reduce costs.

- The Community Based Institutions are supposed to be initiated in the training groups, and the institutions are further expected to emerge as a robust and self-standing farmer organization to spearhead all the development initiatives that have been supported by ASE and to initiate new ones. They are even expected to over see the functions of the training groups, which are strongly believed to continue following the phasing out of ASE. However, the former training strategy documents were not able to clearly identify the possible linkage that should exist between the CBIs and the training groups and the factors of sustainability that really contribute to the cohesiveness and effectiveness of the training groups following the phasing out of ASE.
- Farmers were not adequately recognized as "innovators" and sufficient conditions were not also met to develop the innovation capacity of the local people. Farmers were often sitting on the demand side, because they were considered as legitimate receivers of supports from the supply side (experts' group). On the other hand technologies obtained from research are not always fitting well to local conditions. Farmers need to be encouraged to try the new entries, learn from their experimentations and then adopt what ever is found appropriate to them. For this to take place, ASE need to make sure that sufficient works are done to change the attitudes and mind set of the field staff, the farmers and other actors such as research organizations and the public extension. The strategic plan document of ASE has already recognized that ASE is on the forefront in terms of initiating a national and international network to promote local innovation through mainstreaming the approach in the extension, research and education systems, but very little show cases are on the ground, because the approach was not adequately institutionalized within ASE it self. One of the important areas that help to make a real progress in this connection is therefore to create enough space in the training and extension forums organized by ASE.
- The skill enhancement training programs in the past were less consistent and not well thought through. Farmers only meet fortnightly to continue learning about certain skills, which were initiated but not completed in the past sessions. The time disruption in between had therefore serious effects on the capacity of the farmers to comprehend and remember previous lessons. This calls for a change in approach, so that to make sure the important skill training sessions are delivered with out disruption and in a manner it is sufficient to motivate the farmers start a new business using the new skills. In the past, a serious study was not conducted to identify the kind of skills that may generate feasible economic value in the area. It was just a kind of stereotype application that skills on poultry production and management, bee keeping and local level seed production were provided through out the operation areas of ASE, with out taking in to account what the local market

demands more. Along with the agricultural and rural development policy direction of the Ethiopian government, it is therefore very important to link our skill enhancement training activities with the market as well as with the ongoing FTC initiatives.

- Measuring the impacts of community learning interventions is not an easy exercise, although it is a very important function for organizations like ASE. Having the vision of becoming a centre of excellence in community learning, one of the areas ASE need to pay attention and develop the expertise over time is surely on how to measure impacts of community learning. Experiences have thought ASE that some people have difficulty to understand and appreciate the works of ASE or other organizations that are involved on community training related works. This is simply because the investment they are trying to make is not on visible physical assets but mainly in developing personalities that could have better confidence (right attitude), knowledge and skills to interact better with the nature, with peer groups as well as with other actors. Such a behavioral change is a function of concerted efforts on developing human capital, but the results are not easily traceable unless one undertakes a systematic study to understand the variations that are likely to take place at the end of a definite intervention period. A base line survey that can tell the socio-cultural and economic conditions of the area is needed to make the comparison at the end of the intervention time or in between. But it is probably more relevant for ASE field staff who are involved in community learning related activities, to have their own base line data that include pertinent information which perfectly matches with the training interventions they have in mind, instead of depending on the general base line survey ASE is traditionally carrying out in the beginning of new program intervention. Because of lack of a serious thought on this subject, the impacts of ASE's community learning interventions were not satisfactorily measured and communicated to ASE management/board, the community, donors and the various government bodies.
- ASE has a long tradition of delivering community-training programs, the most dominant training method being lecture, with minimum use of audio visual aids. One of the key reasons for that is the field staffs have inadequate experiences in participatory learning and action methods. It is apparently unthinkable to achieve the objectives of becoming center of excellence in community learning and action; with out the staff being conversant on this subject and with out the organization being recognized as a resource center on related subjects.
- Community training need analysis was used to be made only once in the program period. All the training activities delivered during the program period were therefore based on one time survey and analysis. Under normal condition situations are dynamically changing and ASE's knowledge on the socio economic and socio cultural situation of the local people develop over time. It is therefore important to conduct a rapid Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) assessment and analysis every year, so that to have up-to-date learning topics that really responds to the raising needs periodically. Although it is true that several common topics are possible to be relevant for the entire weredas, but there are always specific learning needs at Kebele

level, which were often overlooked because the learning need prioritization was made based on the topics relevant to the entire weredas. For example the case of malaria has a great deal of public health importance as well as economic and social implications in the lowland kebeles while it is less relevant to the highland kebeles of the same weredas. Therefore ASE learning topics have to consider the specific needs at Kebele level in addition to the common topics identified at weredas level.

- ASE's dream of becoming a center of excellence in community learning is a function of hard working - to develop own community learning model that fits to the rural context in Ethiopia, adopting and scaling up of more innovative community learning approaches such as correspondence education and community radio, developing audio visual materials that responds to the socio-cultural and economic status in the rural area, establishment of training center on community learning related subjects for field staff (cultivating qualified and experienced staff and developing own training facilities/resources), conducting research on adult education, extension, innovation and related subjects. This strategy document is therefore responsible to lay down the groundwork for the development of a learning model of ASE, which is expected to be sharpened and refined in the years to come. Moreover ASE believes that there are several organizations (mainly NGOs) that are involved in community learning (participatory learning and action) kind of activities at different level. It is therefore very important for ASE to take the lead in establishing a Community of Practices on Community Learning and Action that builds on bottom up development approaches, on which actors can share experiences in face-to-face meetings and computer based networks. This will help to facilitate learning among the members but also encourage many more actors to follow suit on pCommunity learning and action.
- Provision of technological inputs to farmers is one of the functions of the extension approach ASE has adopted in the past years. As we can see from the historical development of ASE, "no provision of technological inputs" was featured during the early days' intervention of ASE (correspondence Education and face to face training). This phase was also referred to as phases of "training alone approach". This was followed by free provision of inputs to poor families who can not afford buying. At a latter stage the idea of revolving fund was then introduced to ease access to the poor households for technological inputs. Finally, the idea of saving and credit was introduced in which case farmers get credit with some interest rate to buy technological inputs of their choice. Although these approaches were mentioned as the dominant features of all the phases ASE came through; to date, free provision of inputs in the name of "demonstration" was a widely spread experiences in all ASE operation areas. The field staff appears to be attracted to this model as it makes life easy for them in terms of attracting many participants. In ASE it is still vague how technologies should be available to smallholder farmers and what exactly we mean by demonstration, from the point of view of input provision. Basically, ASE's goal is to make relevant technological inputs available and accessible to the rural poor as much as possible. However the challenge is how to make this possible without affecting sustainability of the supply systems and without creating dependency of

the users on the organization. This strategy document is therefore expected to give a lasting solution to all problems related with technological inputs.

- The central concept of learning is "knowledge", which can be simply defined as a clear and certain perception of something; the act fact or state of understanding (**Webster 1961**). The long held idea that knowledge is generated by science, diffused through education and extension and put in to practice by farmers is a linear model of understanding Knowledge processes, which failed to explain the dynamism that knowledge can be generated by different actors and shared through different means. The linear mode has now become out of context, especially while dealing with sustainable agriculture and development. The generation, documentation, sharing and utilization process of knowledge, which involves various actors working in diverse contexts, has therefore called for a new concept known as knowledge management. A great deal of knowledge and technology is developed or reinvented by farmers (Richards, 1995), many extension agents transfer knowledge from one farmer to another (leeuwis, 1993) and scientists build their research on practical experiences (Vijiverberg 1997). "Recognizing" farmer knowledge or other knowledge from different sources is not enough to bring changes in economic or social development. Knowledge sharing and utilization are rather key concepts in this process. ASE has to travel more miles in terms of developing mechanisms of sharing knowledge generated at farmers' level, at organization level and at national level - on certain themes that interests ASE more. Knowledge sharing is therefore a systematic process of creating opportunities for people to learn at different levels. It is therefore a strategic intervention for ASE to learn how to facilitate knowledge at different level, and this will be a great deal of experience in the country, as the issue of knowledge sharing is becoming a very important concept but with little practical experiences.
- The fact that ASE has been involved on community training for the last four decades may raise a question - to what extent the organization has covered the rural parts of the country over the last many decades. Practically speaking, ASE can not replace the government; apparently it can not be operational all over the country like the government does. Nevertheless, there are many ways of contributing to the development of the nation with out being required to be in every corner of the country. One of the workable approaches to do this is through working with government partners at a closer distance - to share its long years' experiences and professionally developed methods and tools in extension, education and innovation. This will help to improve ASE's contribution to the nation through making greater impacts at country level. ASE is therefore expected to sort out and refine the type of knowledge and experiences it can lend to government partners and other actors widely.
- NGOs were prohibited from being directly involved in saving and credit works and specialized micro finance institutions that work under the auspice of the National Bank of the government of Ethiopia were created. ASE invested lots of energy and funds to establish PEACE micro finance as a partner in this regard. The code of conduct of PEACE as a profit making body and the organizational value of ASE as a closest partner of the rural poor (less credit worthy, according to the language of

micro finance institutions) were not always in good match. Accordingly, the expectations of ASE in terms of delivering financial service to the rural poor were not adequately met. This strategy document needs to explore all possible options to make rural financing possible, with a closest assistance and participation of the Community Based Institutions.

3. Theoretical foundation

Globally, various development models have been used and are still on use. The change from one paradigm to another was gradual, and the speed the change took place varies from country to country, even from institution to institution in the same country. In some cases, the socio economic and political ideology of the nations dictates the kind of development model they should follow. For example, it is not common to see a state controlled and transfer of technology oriented extension services in developed countries. Other models like advisory extension and private extension, which fits better to the economic policies and political ideologies of the developed nations', are more preferred by the western countries. On the other hand, the transfer of technology approach is very popular in developing nations, although it has been widely criticized for being restrictive in terms of knowledge processes. Many African nations tend to use this model, owing to the relative success of the model in the green revolution of some Asian countries. The model also provides easy access for politicians to control power while this cannot happen easily in the system approaches (knowledge and innovation system models). Unlike to the transfer of technology model, the system models are more complicated, unpredictable, and the processes are not easy to be controlled by a single actor or group of actors. Market forces and knowledge actors are mostly on the drivers' seat rather than the formally established public agencies. On the other hand, in the ToT model, the nature of the management is highly centralized as well as the system is hierarchically arranged in such a way that it is easy to make "extension" a policy instrument - which could be used to translate centrally developed policies and programs in to actions in a linear fashion.

It is also some times common to see a mix of the models in many countries. This often happens with the intension of trying new ones while formally adopting others. One thing is however common to all models that are popular in the developed or poor nations, regardless of the fact that those models are crafted based on the recent theoretical explanations or they belong to the old theoretical models. That is, the purpose of all models is to make effective and relevant knowledge available to the users at a fair cost and reasonable time. The way this process take place is therefore the main reason for the development of various models mentioned above.

We can summarize that the major research and extension models in agriculture may fall in to the following frameworks, including the National Agricultural Research System (NARS), Agricultural Knowledge and Information System (AKIS) and the Agricultural Innovation System (AIS). Apparently those institutional frameworks were also using different kinds of methodological approaches that were developed through time to overcome the limitations of the earlier works. These include the classical top down methodological approach; the farming systems research approaches and the

participatory approaches (see annex). In the interest of this document, it is not important to go in to the semantics and typologies of the frameworks and the approaches used at different times in greater academic depth. However, for the sake of creating a common understanding; the development processes as well as the characteristics of the models and the approaches mentioned above are briefly presented below as adopted from the works of Annanda.

Typologies of institutional frameworks for research and development

3.1 National Agricultural Research Systems/NARS

A NARS comprises all of the entities within a country that are responsible for organizing, coordinating, or executing research that contributes explicitly to the development of its agriculture and the maintenance of its natural resource base (ISNAR 1992). The NARS framework has been the mainstay of agricultural development planning for the past 40 years or so. The underlying idea is classically linear: agricultural research, through technology transfer, leads to technology adoption and growth in productivity. The capacity to achieve this goal lies within the agricultural research, training, and extension organizations of the public sector. Capacity is developed by investing in scientific infrastructure, equipping human resources with up-to-date skills, setting research priorities, and providing the operational funds to implement those priorities. This model proved very effective in areas where technological solutions with wide potential applicability were required (for example, to overcome the food shortages in South Asia in the 1970s). The emphasis on setting priorities by agricultural commodity implies that small and nascent activities tend to be neglected until they have reached significant economic importance. The NARS framework highlights the research base that leads to improved production technology, although the adoption of these research results in farmers' fields was often encouraged by separate output and input (especially fertilizer) pricing policies.

Strengths. The NARS framework has been effective in creating agricultural science capacity and in making improved varieties of major food staples available, particularly in Asia, where they transformed food production.

Limitations. Research is not explicitly linked to technology users and other actors in the sector. As a result, NARS priorities are slow to reflect clients' needs and changing circumstances in the sector. The NARS framework is poorly suited for responding to rapidly changing market conditions and providing technologies for producers to supply emerging, high-value niche markets. By emphasizing the development of the capacity of the research system, the NARS framework tends to limit attention to other factors that enable new technologies to be used (although some efforts have been made to overcome this limitation; see box 2.8).

3.2 Agricultural Knowledge and Information Systems/AKIS

Agricultural knowledge and information systems link people and organizations to promote mutual learning and generate, share, and use agriculture-related technology,

knowledge, and information. An AKIS integrates farmers, agricultural educators, researchers and extension staff to harness knowledge and information from various sources for improved livelihoods. Farmers are at the heart of the knowledge triangle formed by education, research, and extension (FAO and World Bank 2000).

The AKIS framework has its origins in the analysis of agricultural extension arrangements. It has a strong focus on how information and ideas are communicated between the various actors in rural areas and how this knowledge can be harnessed for rural livelihoods. AKIS recognizes learning and innovation as an interactive process. The AKIS framework has been promoted strongly by FAO and tackles many of the shortcomings of conventional agricultural research and extension systems, particularly their limited opportunities for interaction between the users and producers of knowledge.

Strengths. AKIS recognizes that multiple sources of knowledge contribute to agricultural innovation and gives attention to developing channels of communication between them. The emphasis on innovation as a social process of learning broadens the scope of agricultural research and extension to include developing local capacities. The addition of educators to the framework is notable. AKIS clearly recognizes that education improves farmers' ability to engage in innovation processes.

Limitations. The focus is restricted to actors and processes in the rural environment and the framework pays limited attention to the role of markets (especially input and output markets), the private sector, the enabling policy environment, and other disciplines/sectors. The AKIS framework recognizes the importance of transferring information from farmers to research systems but tends to suggest that most technologies will be transferred from researchers down to farmers.

3.3 Agricultural Innovation Systems/AIS

The innovation systems concept values the capacities and processes emphasized in the NARS and AKIS frameworks, including channels that give farmers access to information, and well-resourced and up-to-date scientific research and training organizations. The innovation systems concept goes further in recognizing a broader range of actors and disciplines/sectors involved in innovation, particularly the private sector in its many guises along the value chain. Innovation systems analysis recognizes that creating an enabling environment to support the use of knowledge is as important as making that knowledge available through research and dissemination mechanisms.

In the same way, an innovation system encompasses a wider set of activities that are likely to support innovation by including such processes as the creative adaptation and financing of innovation. Like AKIS, the innovation systems concept places greater emphasis on the interaction between actors, but the innovation systems concept encompasses a wider set of relationships that can potentially foster innovation. Because the innovation systems concept includes this broader set of relationships between actors and contexts, it potentially offers a framework for embedding innovation capacities in the rapidly changing market, technological, social, and political environment of contemporary agriculture.

Strengths. This concept, which has been tested widely in the industrial sector, offers a holistic way of strengthening the capacity to create, diffuse, and use knowledge. Aside from knowledge and skills, capacity development includes the attitudes and practices that influence the way organizations deal with knowledge, learning, and innovation and the patterns of relationships and interactions that exist between different organizations. The concept strongly links innovation and investment needs.

Limitations. This concept remains largely untested in the agricultural sector. It is difficult to diagnose the interactions and institutional dimensions of innovation capacity from analysis of published data sources, as these not routinely tracked in industry and national statistics. Less emphasis is placed on education.

Table 1: Defining features of NARS, AKIS and AIS perspectives related to agricultural innovation systems

Defining feature	NARS	AKIS	AIS
Purpose	Planning capacity for agricultural research, technology development and technology transfer	Strengthening communication and knowledge delivery services to people in the rural sector	Strengthening the capacity to innovate throughout the agricultural production and marketing system
Actors	National agricultural research organizations, agricultural universities or faculties of agriculture, extension services and farmers	National agricultural research organizations, agricultural universities or faculties of agriculture, extension services, farmers, NGOs and entrepreneurs in rural areas	Potentially all actors in the public and private sectors involved in creating, diffusing, adapting and using all types of knowledge relevant to agricultural production and marketing
Outcome	Technology invention and technology transfer	Technology adoption and innovation in agricultural production	Combinations of technical and institutional innovations throughout the production, marketing, policy research and enterprise domains
Organizing principle	Using science to create inventions	Accessing agricultural knowledge	New uses of knowledge for social and economic change
Mechanism for innovation	Transfer of technology	Interactive learning	Interactive learning
Degree of market integration	Nil	Low	High
Role of policy	Resource allocation, priority setting	Enabling framework	Integrated components and enabling framework
Nature of capacity strengthen	Infrastructure and human resource development	Strengthening communication between actors in rural areas	Strengthening interactions between actors; institutional development and change to support interaction, learning and innovation; creating an enabling environment

Source: as defined by FAO and World Bank (2002), adapted from Hall (2006).

3.4. Concluding remarks on the theories

This methodological approach, which is also an overarching strategy of ASE, is a manifestation of the **Agricultural knowledge and Innovation Systems** framework. The Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System framework tries to make a logical combination of the two frameworks, the Agricultural Knowledge and Information System (AKIS) and the Agricultural Innovation System (AIS), which are briefly described above. The AKIS mainly refers to the network of actors who are engaged in the development of new knowledge to overcome certain problems and the area of emphasis is often technical. On the other hand, the emphasis of the Agricultural Innovation System is on institutional innovation that may often result application of knowledge to make new economic and social values. *Knowledge* in this case refers to brand new knowledge or recombination of existing knowledge in a novel way or application of a common knowledge to a new and different context. In terms of understanding "knowledge" both perspectives are quite similar except that AKIS pays more attention to knowledge generation processes in a participatory fashion while the innovation systems pays attention more to the dimension of knowledge utilization, with greater emphasis to the private sector as key players of the process. The innovation system approach, although it does show interest on generation of knowledge through participatory research or through a classical research mode, its main thrust is to make knowledge available through *search than research*. It believes that knowledge could be obtained from multiple actors through various means and it could be further utilized, adopted, or modified in learning platforms and network.

In general, the **Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems perspective**, which is a combination of both frameworks, is the theoretical foundation of the Community Learning and Action approach, which this document is trying to describe the details. It strongly assumes that agricultural knowledge doesn't exist only in scientific establishments but also in various sources such as the private sector, farmers, extension workers, NGOs, farmer organizations, policy makers, etc. The current state of progress in the area of information technology is also making life much easier to access knowledge from different sources with relatively little cost. The approach apparently suggests that, these days, development actors may come up with new methods, processes, techniques or technologies that fit well to certain context, even in situations where research organizations are not able to take part. This perspective always recognize the important role researchers could play in the innovation process, but the new culture of collective learning and sharing also helps to access knowledge from multiple sources, even if research organizations are not part of the network. The presence of research is not a precondition for innovation to happen, as long as innovation is understood as a creative way of accessing and utilizing knowledge to make a new economic and/or social value. The conventional distinction made between those who produce scientific knowledge and those sitting on the other corner and waiting to use the knowledge that comes from scientific establishments; is not so visible

in this perspective. In many cases, they are all sitting in the same boat and collective learning and action is the major principle of the sailing team.

The other interesting aspect of this perspective is that generation of knowledge is not an end for itself. The framework pays greater emphasis to making new economic and social values as a result of putting knowledge in to action. The term innovation is therefore not defined here as the generation of technology (as used to be understood in the ToT model) but it is defined as *application of knowledge to make new economic and social values*. Creation of something new is rather called invention, not innovation. The name community learning and action also signifies that the purpose of learning is not just to develop new knowledge or to bring people together just to learn about something new, but to take it further in to actions and make new economic or social benefits.

As mentioned above, this perspective also addresses seriously the issue of institutional innovations. In the old models (ToT perspective), agricultural development was considered only as a function of "success" in technological achievement. But institutional innovation is a key social process that greatly influences development in general. In this case, institutional innovation refers not necessarily to organizational changes but changes in the daily routines of the people or a new culture of doing something differently. For example, if a given agricultural research organization adopts participatory research approach as a new tradition, by replacing the conventional top down and technology transfer approach, then the change can be considered as institutional innovation. Institutional innovation is therefore a comprehensive change that affects several dimensions of the human and organizational aspects. For example in the above given case, the new change may affect the organizational structure, research review rules and procedures/systems, incentives for researchers, attitudes and skills of researchers, networks and linkages of the organizations etc. The combined result of all this changes makes institutional innovation. The technical and institutional innovations are nevertheless like the two faces of a coin. Sooner or later, one may cause the emergency of the other. This could be understood well by looking in to practical examples that have taken place in ASE recently. For example a new institutional change of considering local innovations as entry point for research and development cause the emergency of a technical innovation of farmers to control bacterial wilt of Enset in Amaro. Several examples of this kind could be cited. On the other hand, some brilliant technological innovations may cause a radical institutional innovation. With out such changes the technological innovation may remain less relevant.

The Community Learning and Action strategy therefore accommodates the good elements of the AKIS perspective and that of the AIS and the focus is both at bringing technological and institutional innovations at grassroots level. The CoLA forums (i.e. CoLF) could be used as breeding grounds for technical and institutional innovations, the way they are described here above.

4. Community Learning and Action

In ASE context CoLA is defined as a process of discovering/ generating, accessing, sharing and utilizing knowledge in a collective learning mode, with a purpose of

improving livelihood, competence and, local capacity for development. The term “Participatory” is mentioned here to underscore that the process is not a top down model, in which case one actor assumes significant power to make decisions in the learning process. On the other hand the term “learning” also signifies the fact that knowledge acquisition is not a one-way process but multidirectional and complex one. In other words, the source of knowledge is assumed to be diverse, which may include formal research and extension institutions, NGOs, farmers, Farmer organizations, policy makers, the private sector, internets etc. Most importantly the term “action” has significant importance in this concept. Whatever type of knowledge that may be produced or accessed in this process would mean nothing unless the knowledge is translated in to action. Translating knowledge in to action is again not a straight forward process because it is affected by several factors such us change of attitude, incentives, resources such us finance, land, water etc, policy supports, confidence (risk aversion mechanism), market linkages etc. The main goal of ASE is therefore not to generate or access knowledge but to create enabling environment where the resource poor farmers may apply the knowledge acquired in to action, there by make new economic and social value that sustains. This is indeed one example how the Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System perspective can be operationalize.

4.1. Principles of CoLA

- **Optimal participation:** ensuring acceptable level of participation of relevant stakeholders in the planning, execution and evaluation processes of all programs. The presence of diverse stakeholders in a given event is not the only measurement of optimal participation but reasonable representation of the users and the attitude of creating adequate chances for them, to make decisions on matters that affect their lives and environment is the most critical one.
- **Good communication and facilitation skill:** The use of language that is most understandable by the community and an attitude as well as ability of encouraging people to share what they have in mind and to become courageous and confident in trying something new.
- **Knowledge management:** The art of facilitating the generation, sharing and making use of knowledge from different sources, with the purpose of bringing new benefits (economic and social) to the users.
- **Cost effectiveness:** The art and attitude of making more benefits from lesser cost.
- **Flexibility:** The attitude of appreciating unpredictable factors that could unexpectedly affect planned activities and a behavior of making appropriate response to adopt changes when such factors take place, even if the anticipated change is a major one.
- **Innovativeness:** It is behaviour of taking risk and trying or experimenting on technical issues or institutional arrangements to create something new. The "newness" is nevertheless not necessarily to the world but to the given context. Innovation could take place in either of the following forms 1) Adapting new knowledge to own context through a process of appropriation 2) as a result of creative blending of new and existing knowledge to make more sense out of it 3) Recombining existing knowledge in a novel way to make new values out of it 4)

Application of common knowledge to a different context so that to add new economic or social values to the context.

- **Networking:** is the art of making connections with people and organizations. The bottom line rule of networking is that it is a voluntary action of partners who may share similar values and/or goals and where every member can obtain some benefits as well as offer something to others.
- **Gender responsiveness:** Behaviour of responding to the needs of men and women equally but also with a conscious attention and greater emphasis to the empowerment of women in a society where the system is traditionally male dominated.
- **Dynamism:** The basic understanding that development is not static but a dynamic process which may continue to change as a result of a growing capacity for knowledge generation and knowledge network, changing environmental situations as well as changing political and economic orders of the world. Changes in development approaches, principles and philosophies are therefore functions of the dynamic socio-economic and political processes that may take place either in the smaller world where we live and act or in the bigger planet.
- **Community Capacity Development:** A function of creating opportunities to develop the inner potential and local assets (material, financial, social, knowledge) of the community so that to help them become master of their own development agendas. This principle is considered to overcome the limitations of the conventional service delivery approach, which assumes that outsiders (experts) need to provide all the services to the poor community because they do not have the capacity to carry out any of the services they need by their own.

4.2 Goals

4.2.1 Overall goal

- To develop the capacity and self-esteem of the local people to achieve sustainable livelihood and natural resource management.

4.2.2 Sub goals

- Bring farmers together to carry out collective and collaborative inquiry with the purpose of initiating community actions in solving community problems.
- To bring bottom-up technology development in collaboration with relevant stakeholders and thereby improve food production, productivity and natural resource management
- To support local innovation processes in agriculture and natural resource management practices, there by improve the livelihood of the community and develop the confidence of the local people to depend on own assets.
- To support adaptation of technologies that comes to the attention of farmers from different sources through technology transformation processes (not technology transfer) to make it fit to local realities, thereby to improve food production, productivity and natural resource management.

- To bring about behavioral and attitudinal change of the community in basic and shared ill-development practices.
- To develop the technical and entrepreneurial skills of the people on agricultural and non-agricultural income generation schemes there by improve their income.
- To improve access of the community to financial services as well as input and output markets and help them maximize benefits as a result of interacting with the private sector.
- To improve the level of literacy in the community
- Enable scaling-up of good practices among farmers and other development actors.

4.3 Major components of CoLA

This new strategy was designed to help ASE develop human capital in the programme areas. It will also significantly contribute to ASE's efforts to become a centre of excellence in community learning and action in the country. As per to the recently adopted strategy of ASE, PLA comprises five major components, including, Establishing and running a training center on facilitation, communication and innovation skills, Initiating and supporting community of practices (CoP) in community Learning and scaling up of good practices in Community learning and knowledge management and - a community learning forum (CoLF). Each will be described as follows.

4.3.1. Establishing and managing own training Center

ASE believes that human resource development is the centerpiece of development. ASE has been engaged in community training and education since its inception. With its long years of existence, ASE has developed rich experience in community learning methodologies and tools. With these premises, ASE opts to become center of excellence in community learning and action in Ethiopia. One of the strategic measures to realize this is establishing its own training center. With this regard, ASE has now opened its own training center, which named as Jari FACT center; Facilitation and Communication Training center - in South wollo Zone of Amhara region at Tehuledere wereda -Jari.

The main objectives of establishing the training center include:

- To make ASE staff more competent in delivering Participatory learning and action methodologies.
- To equip field staff particularly government extension agents with the necessary skills that would better improve their efficiency in implementing Agricultural development and extension activities.
- To equip farmer facilitators/promoters with the knowledge and skills on cross cutting development issues.
- To improve leadership and management capacities of CBI members through intensive training on organization and management (including recording, book keeping, etc).

Establishment of a training center is a challenging task. It is challenging basically because it is an expensive venture. ASE cannot continue providing training to government staff on its own cost. As a matter of strategic intervention, particularly to promote some of the ideas and philosophies of ASE, the organization may allocate resources to run training programs in its own training centre. For this purpose, the Jari training centre is an appropriate place to do the work. However, ASE has to think of developing the staff capacity and facilities to provide more professionally managed training to other NGOs and organizations on cost. Establishing its own training centre in Central Avenue is a very important idea for ASE but not a necessary condition. That may take place if ASE has access to enough resources and ASE may not prevent it self from taking that role until the training center is established somewhere. The necessary condition for ASE is to have the expertise, the training materials and adequate staff to run such type of trainings by renting training centers where ever is available; on top of the existing one.

4.3.2. Establishing and facilitating community of practice

Community of practice refers to the process of social learning that occurs when people who have a common interest in some subject or problem collaborate over an extended period to share ideas, find solutions, and build innovations. ASE has a strong believe that development can only be realized when the community become well aware and develop the necessary skills and knowledge for life. To realize its mission, ASE designed to establish CoP with organizations who are working in community learning in the country. With this regard the following strategic measures will be taken:

- Develop a directory, which shows profile of organizations who are engaged in community learning.
- Establish Dbase in community learning at ASE HQ, which serves as a source of information to interested individuals/ researchers and organizations.
- Establish a national network on community learning.

It is believed that the above strategic measures will help to attain the following outputs: build strong relationship/network/ with organizations that are running community learning, explore opportunities, exchange information and share experiences, set common goals, efficient utilization of resource and avoid duplication of efforts.

4.3.3 Knowledge management

For ASE, knowledge management is the process of generating, accessing, documenting and sharing knowledge for action through various mechanisms. ASE believes that as a result of its systematic and continuous engagement in rural development activities, the organization is contributing to the generation of context specific and practical knowledge in development. ASE doesn't believe that this role is only played by academic and research organizations. Nevertheless, it is important to use systematic approaches to identify, document, and share the type of knowledge generated as a result of long year's engagement of the organization in the field. For example, its engagement

in community based institution development, Community Learning Forum, promoting local innovations etc are some of the worth mentioning areas where ASE is contributing in the knowledge generation arena. But the question is whether or not ASE is involved in systematic learning processes to develop the knowledge and share to others too. ASE is not only generating but also tries to access relevant knowledge bodies from several sources, including the farming community, research organizations, extension organizations, donors, the private sector and other sources such as the internet etc. Eventually ASE is trying to make sense out of these bodies of knowledge through translating it into action and developing it in the process. Apparently it is very important for ASE to sort out the most relevant and worth sharing knowledge and bring them to the attention of its own staff working in different places, NGOs working in similar sectors, government partners (research and extension agencies), donors and other international partners. To do this ASE will follow the following approaches:

a) At farmers' level: Farmers are involved in several research and development activities. The idea of promoting local innovations in ASE is particularly creating great opportunities for the organization to learn not only from the innovations per se but also from the process. Why some people are exceptionally innovative and others not, the enabling and constraining factors for innovation to happen, response of state and non state organizations to farmers innovation, the opportunity of commercializing local innovations so that to provide better chances of economic gains for the innovative farmers, etc are some of the key areas on which systematic learning should be carried out in ASE. The community-based institutions are also supposed to emerge and develop with unique characteristics and experiences in each program area. This is because the CBIs are encouraged to be as innovative as possible to address the challenges that are most important to their own context. It is therefore important to learn from what farmers are doing in practice and create a learning environment for them to share their innovative practices both at institutional level and technical achievements.

b) At organizational level: ASE is trying to develop strategies based on previous experiences and lessons and the implementation of those strategies is left to the program offices, which are in the forefront of the development work. Apparently, based on the context and creativity of the staffs, the implementation of the strategies varies from place to place. New and interesting issues are always emerging from different program offices in the course of implementing programs. There is of course a possibility of information exchange, in this regard, during the annual and six monthly monitoring meetings. However it is still very important to organize special learning events so that to pay attention to the most important aspects as well as share experiences of the program offices on selected themes. It is particularly important to focus on the topics that contribute to ASE's goal of becoming centre of excellence in community learning and action. Accordingly, learning issues like CoLF, CBI, innovation, distance education, and community radio should get priority in the learning processes. Therefore it is important to organize annual learning and sharing workshops within the organization on these themes and the outcomes should be documented and shared to others using appropriate

medias. For some specific purpose, for example development of manuals, ASE may use some approaches such as write-shops.

c) At inter organizational forums: In accordance to the new strategic document of ASE, networking is among the core functions of the organization. One of the rationales why networking is considered so important is because ASE believes that, given to its long time engagement in rural development works, the organization must be on the forefront to share its experiences to like-minded organizations. Most importantly, ASE strongly believes that one of the good ways of achieving its strategic goal of becoming centre of excellence in community learning and action is as a result of engaging it self in networks that can create avenue for learning. Because of this reasons ASE was committed to support the establishment of a few networks and network organizations such as, Prolinnova Ethiopia, Learning Institutions on Farmers and counterparts Experiences (LIFE Net), Sustainable Land Use Forum (SLUF) Poverty Action Network Ethiopia (PANE), and Rural Development forum of CRDA. It is therefore very important for ASE to use the opportunities to be created by those forums, to present professionally well thought papers as well as learn from the experience of other organizations, which are advanced in some of the interest areas of ASE.

4.3.4. Scaling up (Making a Greater Impact at the National Level)

ASE's Head Office staff should enhance their capacities to run more projects that may have greater impacts on subjects such as community learning and action as well as broader rural development themes; as such projects will improve ASE's contribution to the national development effort. Innovative ideas that pertain to ASE's mission and strategic goals should be encouraged to come forth, and ASE needs to approach more donors for additional resources. ASE will have to, nevertheless, handle (implement) such initiatives by hiring consultants or temporary staff for the specific projects. Why? Because the projects will be too many for its permanent staff to execute, given the fact that they are countrywide. To mention but a few, projects aimed at supporting the work of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development on FTC and ATVET, knowledge management initiatives at the national level, the project that ASE is currently implementing in collaboration with the Galilee College, the projects on correspondence education and community radios outside the regular programme areas of ASE, the staff training in communication, facilitation and innovation skills that ASE is giving to other NGOs and government staff on request, are already too many for ASE's permanent staff to handle. Therefore along these lines, ASE may think of formulating or initiating new projects with the support of consultants and additional project funds.

4.3.5 Community Learning Forum

Community Learning Forum (CoLF) is a participatory learning and sharing avenue of the local people on social and technical issues that affects the livelihood and the environment of the community. It is a knowledge house of the local people where interested men and women form small and coherent groups on voluntary basis to create a learning environment in which:

- New agricultural technologies or practices are tried and adapted,
- The innovations of the local people are identified, cultivated/ developed and shared
- The capacity of the local people to innovate is highly supported and encouraged,
- Scientists and farmers meet in a cooperative and appreciative spirit,
- The legacy of harmful traditions and culture are challenged,
- New skills on agricultural and non agricultural activities are acquired,
- Farmers are encouraged to start new agricultural business through enhanced entrepreneurial skills,
- Farmers are supported to access better input and output markets,
- Illiterate people are educated on how to read, write and do some enumeracy.

This is the major component of the CoLA strategy and this document will provide greater attention to the guidelines of CoLF.

5. Guidelines on CoLF

The main skeleton of the Community Learning Forum (CoLF) comes from the classical ASE training approach, classical FFS, PID and Functional Adult Literacy approach. A logical and careful mix of these approaches makes the CoLF to be a self-standing and '*all in one*' methodological approach for research, extension, education and training. The forum is expected to be established at grassroots/village level. To begin with, it is recommended to have a minimum of two CoLFs per Kebele, with possible increase in number, depending on the size and topography of the Kebele. In situations where the capacity of the Development Facilitators is believed to go beyond the recommendation, the Program offices are advised to handle more CoLFs at any one time. However care has to be made not to increase the number on the expense of quality. Each CoLF may have 25-30 people and the gender composition has to be always balanced. It is basically assumed that ASE DFs will run 2-3 new CoLFs every year, and those who finish the term successfully will continue to stand on their own feet, with facilitation support of the Village Level Development Promoters (VLDPs). This implies that the number of CoLFs in each Kebele will increase year after year. Apparently, if ASE stays 5 years in a given Kebele, the assumption is that 10-15 active CoLF groups will be available in one Kebele over those years. In other wards, 300-450 farmers per Kebele will be organized in

the CoLF groups and this is again assumed to make more than 60% of the Kebele residents, who are in the active age bracket (18-65). The CoLFs is an ideal development forum where the community will raise, discuss and analyze social and economic issues and exert efforts to bring about concrete results in their lives.

This approach was developed mainly to amalgamate the dispersed and overstretched efforts of ASE in training, education, extension and research related activities into one system, which helps to monitor impacts easily and follow up progress too. The pilot project has also indicated some findings that the CoLF approach is more cost effective than the previous approach, in which the extension and research activities were dispersed and ASE staffs were overburdened because they were forced to carry out all activities in different places, with different target groups on similar periods. Above all, CoLF will be formed in such a way that it will be easy for the CBIs to continue supporting it even after ASE has completely withdrawn from the area. The fact that CoLF members will inevitably develop a strong social and economic bond over the years to come will help them continue to learn and act as a group even after the phasing out of ASE.

CoLF members are expected to meet once a week, for about three hours. The members have to draw the annual work plan together, with a detailed breakdown to show the expected achievements that correspond to the major agricultural seasons of the area (at least the rainy season/dry seasons). More specific plans should be developed, at least for a period of one month. Every member need to know, by heart, what the forum will pay attention to, during the weekly meetings of the month. Basically, the CoLF has four major components, including Social Learning, Skill Enhancement and Entrepreneurship Development (SEED), Participatory Innovation Development (PID) and Livelihood Based Literacy (LBL). However, two of the components – social learning and PID are on the weekly schedule of the CoLF. SEED will be coordinated at central level and the task of the forum in this regard is limited. LBL is treated outside CoLF sessions.

Although the detail plan of action will be worked out by the CoLF members, it is important for the facilitators to note that Crop related PID and skill enhancement trainings need to be facilitated during the main season while livestock and natural resource management related activities could be mainly considered in the off season. However the social learning topics and the Livelihood Based Literacy could be entertained in any time of the year.

5.1 Components of CoLF

5.1.1 Social learning:

The concept of social learning has broader application, far more than it is used in this document. For ASE, social learning simply refers to the educational processes of farmers on various social issues, which may take place in a group mode where volunteered men and women farmers assemble together to learn for reasonably long period of time. The main learning topics are supposed to be socially relevant issues to the community with a

particular focus on the social evils that seriously affects the economic, health and other social fabrics of the community. There are also times when the environmental issues, human right issues, marketing issues and organizational matters are entertained in the social learning forums. Any issue apart from technical matters, that need to be discussed by the community and reached consensus at, will be a subject of interest of the social learning forum. The learners have to identify the learning topics with the help of ASE development facilitators. However, topics of global and national concerns, like HIV/AIDS, gender and environment will, be included as a result of the intervention of ASE staff, if at all those topics did not emerge during the participatory need assessment sessions. Nevertheless, it is important for ASE staff to stimulate and facilitate discussion with the CoLF members, to help them appreciate the importance of the newly introduced topics. Techniques such as community dialogue or conversation should be used to effectively introduce the new and important social topics to the agendas of the CoLF.

From experience, topics to be entertained by the social learning forum could be too many. It is therefore necessary for the community and the development facilitators of ASE to prioritize the topics. Jointly, they have to set out criteria before doing the prioritization so that to end up with the real needs of the community. The CoLF members will be subjected to discuss on the selected social topics in good depth. The aim of these sessions is to really focus on the important social issues on which the behavior and attitudes of the community need to be changed so that people can make use of the existing opportunities better.

Beyond the CoLF members, ASE Program office has to organize public education events on the most critical social topics to the wider community. The learning issues can be extracted from CoLF sessions, which would be believed to be addressed to the public. In addition, messages related to man made or natural incidents or hazards, such as crop pest or disease, human communicable diseases, or livestock epidemics, etc can be conveyed to warn the public and take appropriate action. In Mass/public education program, the CBI has to take the lead in initiating, organizing and managing the event. ASE will of course extend its hand to the CBI in technical and financial aspects. The following strategies can be used in organizing mass/public education programs.

Mass/public education strategies

i. Market day intervention: This strategy is particularly important to create awareness on cases like HIV/AIDS and also to communicate urgent information like fast spreading pest infestation, prevalence of crop/livestock diseases, communicable human disease, etc. Market days are organized normally once or twice a week and in rural area many people are supposed to come to the market places to meet their social and economic objectives. Because market days are not only economic centers but also places where very diverse socio-cultural events are believed to take place.

The trainer has to select the largest market place in his/her respective Kebeles for this purpose. Tape records and mobile movies can be used to communicate the message. Role-plays, composed with local music could be recorded and transmitted using tape

records and loud speakers. If situations allow, very short role-plays can also be presented in a strategic location of the market places. Vehicle mounted movie equipment can be used to show films but this is most likely possible during the night. For this purpose, the program office has to make ready movable and simple stages.

ii. Local social forum intervention: Experience has thought ASE that at Kebele level there are several forums like Idir, Mahiber, senbete and other religious gatherings. In these forums, high number of people are expected to attend and in many cases, most of the influential community members are present. The meetings have basically their own purpose but one can make advantage of the gathering very gently. The facilitator can be able to make use of these forums is to establish a linkage with the leaders of the forums. The community members need to be convinced that ASE will be taking few minutes to communicate a message. It is usually important to start using these forums to communicate the immediate and practical issues of the community. Through time the facilitator might be able to use these forums to communicate new ideas & concerns as well.

Cautions must be taken not to use much of the time of the people. Key message can be communicated through lecturing or presenting short plays.

It is however important to note that there is always a chance of missing the poor segment of the community and women in many of the social forums. Therefore, the facilitator has to take into account that these forums should not be the only mechanisms to communicate message.

iii. School system intervention: The principal actors in the school system are students, teaching staff and administrative staff. Experiences has thought ASE that school children do play a role in communicating messages to their parents on vital economic and social issues. Basically, the purpose of addressing the school children is to help them learn about selected topics, which deserves their attention. Gender, environmental, civic education, HIV/AIDS, sanitation issues, and issues like innovativeness and participatory thinking are some of the relevant topics that can be discussed with the school children. On the other hand, students have normally the tradition of discussing some of the interesting topics they used to learn in the classroom with their parents and also make some effort to persuade and change their attitude.

ASE can also address the teaching and administrative staff in many ways. Basically, issues like HIV/AIDS and gender are very critical topics that need to be discussed with the staff. Moreover, ASE may organize training of trainers course on many of the topics indicated above. The purposes of doing such training activities is to built the capacity of the school teachers in many ways and encourage them to mainstream some of the most important topics with the regular education programs.

Interactive lecturing, role-plays/drama, movies etc are some of the best methods that can be used to address the school children. The best time to organize training of trainers for the teaching staff is during the summer break time.

iv. Formal Kebele level meetings: The Kebele council normally organizes different meetings to address the Kebele people for economic and / or political reasons. One of the events is safety net program which is normally takes place on weekly bases where all the productive force of the Kebele gathered to undertake some development activities like road maintainace, soil and water conservation, etc. In such meetings, ASE DFs in consultation with the KA executives can organize a brief awareness raising education on selected topics. It is advisable to organize the training program prior to the actual safety net program. Otherwise, the people may get tired and do not follow the message attentively and productively.

Different participatory learning methods can be used – Role-play/dram, mobile movies, use of guest speakers on selected topics, etc.

V. Organize special events: Creatively, ASE PO in consultation with wereda council and sector offices can organize special events both at wereda and Kebele level. These special events may include environmental day, women day, sports day, health day, etc. To organize such events, a consultation has to be done first and consensus needs to be reached with partners on the following issues: when to organize, where to organize, what to present, who will be involved (role sharing), and How to organize. After these issues get a clear answer, a plan of action (including budget breakdown) will be worked out.

Based on the plan of action, all actors have to make the necessary preparations on their area of assignment. Some of the preparatory tasks may include: preparing learning materials and aids on selected topic, informing guest speakers (e.g. CoLF members or experts) ahead of time, allocating the proposed budget and availing the required inputs, designing the stage – posting and decorating with logos & ribbons, preparing flyers/cap that will be distributed on the event.

5.1.2 Skill training & entrepreneurship development:

This is designed to help trainees improve their skill or develop a new skill in selected topics on agricultural and non-agricultural fields. The outcome of this type of training must enable the trainee demonstrate new way of doing things or more efficient and effective ways of handling their own business. This training has to be preceded by a well thought -through market study. The outcomes of the market assessment should dictate the type of agricultural and non-agricultural training topics, on which ASE has to invest. Care has to be done that the investment in this activity must be able to pay farmers meaningfully. Farmers need to be encouraged, for self-employment or to sell their skilled labor so that to make more income or to substantially improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their routine works. Skill Enhancement trainings will not be delivered at CoLF level. It has to be organized at program office level and the duration may take one week to two months even some times more. This is because 1) The training has to be intensively delivered with out interruption (unlike to the modality of CoLF where people meet every week) 2) All CoLF members are not expected to take part in a given training, which is supposed to take place at certain time of the year. The CoLF members are expected to identify and recommend the candidates from each group. 3) It will be

cost effective to deliver the training at a central venue by trained trainers instead of having similar trainings in each CoLF.

The basic idea is that the program office, may for example, identify 6 agricultural topics and 4 non-agricultural topics for the skill enhancement training. This will provide opportunity for all CoLF members to be trained in the areas of their choice but also based on the recommendation of the rest of the members. At any one time 3-5 CoLF members could be invited to take part in the training course. For example if each CoLF recommended 5 members for a given training and if the total number of CoLFs that exist in the program office is 20, then the total number of trainees at any one time will be 100. In such cases the number of trainees is too big to handle in one training event. The program office has therefore to conduct the training several times, by identifying ideal locations for the training. In principle, each CoLF member must have a chance to take part at least in one of the skill enhancement-training program. But in some cases a few members could have chance to get involved in 2 or 3 training programs as long as chances are available and the CoLF members recommend so. In all cases, the program office as well as the CBI leaders must keep eyes on the gender balance of trainees. Those who are trained on the agricultural skills must be able to start a new business in a more organized and market oriented modality.

The CBI should be able to make the Community Innovation and Development Fund (CIDF) available for them. However each member is also expected to make his/her own resource available for the business. This is an expression of interest, which is very important criteria that need to be considered by the CBI. Nevertheless care has to be taken not to exclude the poor members of the CoLF, just because they cannot raise their own money to start up the new business. It is presumed that at the end of the day, most of the CoLF members will be engaged in diversified agricultural business with the financial support of the CBI. As mentioned above, such trainings are not going to be handled at CoLF level but still the CoLF as a forum can make use of this intervention. For example, the CoLF facilitators may organize a kind of experience sharing visits to the most successful farms within the Kebele or beyond. This could be done during the PID sessions of the CoLF and it may help to motivate many farmers to start similar business with the support of the CBI or by their own. The visit may also help to identify new researchable topics, which the CoLF members will be interested to investigate. Secondly, those farmers who succeeded in the business (Following the SEED) could be invited as guest speakers in the forum.

Out of the four components of CoLF, partly described above, The Skill Enhancement and Entrepreneurship Development shares similar experience with the Farmers Training Centers (FTCs) of the Office of agriculture and rural development. ASE will have to; therefore, make arrangements to use the FTCs and the wereda experts to train the farmers more effectively, if the right resource persons and facilities are available. Moreover ASE needs to make closer consultation with the FTC trainers and the weredas supervisors to avoid duplication of efforts and resources and to share the experience of one to the other. It is presumed that the office of the ministry of agriculture and rural development will be on the forefront to support the CBIs, particularly the CoLFs, following the phasing out of ASE. The support of the MoARD, in terms of introducing

new technologies to be tested by the forum members as well as providing technical supports for farmer led research activities is highly expected. The linkage has to therefore need to take place just from the beginning, instead of trying to make the connection at a later stage.

The non-agricultural skill enhancement training should be treated differently. The target groups need to be mainly land less youth in the village. If some of the land less youths are already members of the CoLF, it is important to give the priority for them, otherwise the trainees need to be identified out side the CoLF members. This has to be basically the works of the CBI in collaboration with ASE facilitators and VLDPs. Both the trainees of the agricultural and non-agricultural courses should be able to start a small business in line to the type of training they were offered. It is apparently important to provide them entrepreneurial skills, including book keeping, business planning, risk management, investment and business expansion, networking in business, basic principles of markets, marketing strategies, business attitudes etc. The purpose of such training is to enable the farmers do agriculture as business instead of looking in to it as a traditional and subsistence activity. Moreover it is to promote entrepreneurship in the rural settings through encouraging the landless youth get engage in to non-agricultural services.

5.1.3 Participatory Innovation Development (PID)

Participatory Innovation Development is a partnership of farmers and other stakeholders (extension workers, researchers, NGO staff, consultants etc) to: 1) develop local innovations of farmers in a participatory fashion 2) collectively solve critical problems that have been reported as serious challenges of agriculture and environment because no proved solution are available from the scientific sources or from the indigenous knowledge domain 3) test new technologies through group/individual experimentation and collective learning processes so that to make it fit to own contexts by making appropriate changes. PID, in ASE context, is not primarily done to contribute to basic and academic knowledge system. It is a type of action research and thus expected to bring about practically valid results to the users in the specific context. Unlike to the conventional research, in PID, the experimenters (in this case, farmer) are the first one to make economic benefits out of it.

There are three forms of PID; which are described as local innovation led, technology triggered and problem led.

a) Local innovation led: Farmers are highly encouraged to identify and clarify local innovations. These local innovations are therefore considered as entry points for further development work through participatory arrangements. Local innovations differ from indigenous knowledge simply because they are the dynamic forms of IKs. IKs are static but if some one is trying to make changes on the IK (addition or reduction of some elements through informal experimentation), then, he or she is innovating. Therefore, every moment we talk about local innovations, we are just referring to the IKs, which are in a dynamic process of informal experimentation. Nevertheless, it has to be noted that IK is not the only source of local innovations. Scientific knowledge could also serve

the same purpose as long as farmers are trying to make changes on the modern scientific knowledge/technology through trial or experimentation to make it more appropriate to own situations. According to Prolinnova-Ethiopia, the term “innovative farmers” refers to those who have tried or are trying out new but value-adding agricultural or NRM practices, using their own knowledge and wisdom but also through appropriation of outsiders' knowledge, often called scientific. Critchley et al, (1999), has also defined ‘Farmer innovators’ are farmers or “land users” who innovate, test and try new methods of conservation or production, on their own initiative, often using ideas from various sources.’ Farmer innovators are not like the model farmers who are purposely trained by extension workers on pre-existing technologies. There is always an added value in the works of innovative farmers and that value addition is one of the important parameters, which qualify the works of such farmers as innovation.

The general definition of an ‘innovation’ is: ‘Better or modified traditional or introduced systems or initiatives or something new, tried and tested or currently under experimentation.’ (Sones,K.R. et.al, 2003). Therefore, farmer Innovations are some times subjected for advanced Participatory Innovation Development (PID) exercises, in which case extension workers, researchers or others may involve.

The fact that the entry point of this kind of PID exercise is “local innovation” makes this approach different from those commonly known participatory research approaches (also partly mentioned below). The bottom line principle of this specific type of PID is the fact that local innovations are entry points for the work and in the course of developing the innovations in a participatory fashion; the local innovators are still in the drivers' seat through the process. However it is not a rule of thumb that all local innovations have to be developed through taking them in to the PID process. In some case the local innovations could be shared to fellow farmers with out being required to carry out PID. Whenever the local innovations are found good enough for dissemination, it could be shared with other farmers using the farmer-to-farmer extension approach or any other knowledge sharing mechanisms. Nevertheless, much attention should not be paid to transfer the knowledge/technologies generated by farmers’ as extension workers do in the conventional model of transfer of technology. It is rather important to help farmers learn from both the process and the end result. Here, the basic principle is to promote the spirit of innovativeness and participatory Innovation Development among farmers instead of paying greater emphasis to promote the technologies per say. This will help farmers to have the confidence and ability to give answers to the location and situation specific problems they might be challenged in their domain. Such problems are not often visible for the formal researchers. Even if they are visible, time and resource may not allow the formal research and extension system to give answers to all. The best solution is therefore to recognize the innovation capacity of the local people and develop their capacity to innovate in their routine works.

The key function of the program office in this connection is therefore to conduct an inventory of local innovations on crop, livestock, natural resource management, post harvest management, mitigating climate changes etc and conduct a "CoLF planning and review workshop". In this workshop most of the CoLF components, including PID will be discussed and agreement will be reached on the plans. The inventory work has to be

carried out by ASE development facilitators, VLDPs and some farmers who represent the CoLFs. This team will be responsible to make an exhaustive list of local innovations of the respective Kebele. Attention has to be paid to the gender responsiveness of the process. There are several innovations that could be developed by women and yet remained unrecognized because of gender bias. Deliberate actions have therefore to be taken to discover women innovations, which are worth reporting. Findings of the exercise are expected to be presented in the Kebele level CoLF and the CoLF members need to be able to sort out and prioritize the type of innovations, which are worth looking in the future learning events. The prioritized list of local innovations with detailed descriptions and other information will be presented in the annual CoLF planning and review workshop. This exercise has to be conducted every year, and it is presumed that the most important work, which will be time consuming but also productive exercise, would be carried out in the first year. In the subsequent years, the exercise is more of a complementary work to the original database but there are times when very important innovations could also be reported in the subsequent years. This is because; the efforts of ASE to promote the concept of innovation in the first few years may motivate thousands of farmers to innovate something new in their works. It is also very important for the program offices to pay attention to follow up how that the spirit of innovativeness is getting spread from year to year in the weredas as a result of the continuous awareness creation works, skill developments interventions as well as recognition and rewarding of local innovators.

In the annual CoLF planning and review workshop the findings of the whole CoLFs in the program area need to be presented and a data base of the entire findings has to be kept at local level. It is apparently important to communicate this information with ASE head office so that to establish a data base in central locations, which could be available to other ASE program offices, other partners in Prolinnova and to the rest of the world. Moreover the workshop should select the most relevant local innovations that need to be followed up at weredas level, so that progress of those innovations will be presented in the annual CoLF planning and review workshop. Nevertheless, the rest of the local innovations which are probably very relevant to the Kebele level CoLF could be dealt their.

It is important to note that the generic meaning of PID refers to the kind of farmer, extension workers and researchers partnership to develop a local innovation. This definition is used in many places and by many practitioners. Nevertheless, here in ASE as well as in Prolinnova Ethiopia, this definition was found too narrow to capture the important roles of farmers/local people in the innovation process. Therefore, as briefly mentioned above, in the context of ASE, PID has a more broader application that it refers to all innovation process in which case the entry point is not only local innovation (which is described above) but also problematic situations that need to be overcome mainly by the involvement of the local people and testing of outsiders idea (technology, methodology, process etc) so that to adapt/reject it based on the outcomes of the informal experimentation the local people may involve in a more organized learning processes. The detail descriptions of the two types of PID, as applied to ASE context are coming next.

b). Technology/Outsiders knowledge - triggered: Technologies from any part of the world are encouraged to come to the attention of the farmers but not in the spirit of pushing the technologies for use. Farmers are expected to conduct a participatory research so that to make it fit to own realities or reject the technologies; at times they found it completely inappropriate. ASE project officers are therefore required to learn about the agricultural potential of the area and thereby identify relevant technologies from research centers, technology centers, private sector, internet and other sources. However, the program/project officers do not have to dump range of technologies to the farmers haphazardly, but the findings need to be presented in the above mentioned "CoLF planning and review workshop" before they are promoted to the farmers in the CoLF. In this workshop the project officers and some program officers from ASE head office, relevant government partners, NGOs working in the areas, invited guests as well as CBI leaders and representatives of the CoLFs will take part. The experts group from ASE should be able to make full inventory of the technologies relevant for the area and should come up with simple and detailed description of the technologies that could be available in the market. Enough opportunities have to be given to the CBI leaders and CoLF representatives to understand the nature of the new entries and to learn about the expected benefits. This workshop is not literally meant to sell or to push technologies to farmers but to provide chances to the farmers know what the world could offer to them. The farmers have to be encouraged to select some of the most important technologies, which are completely new to them, so that to take the technologies further in to the PID process for learning within the CoLF. It is expected that farmers will have the capacity to work on the new technologies and make appropriate changes to make it fit to their own circumstances.

c). Local problem - triggered: This is very commonly known type of participatory research in ASE, which is often farmer led and some times expert led. In this work, farmers, extension workers and researchers play their own role in the process of technology development to address a known problem situation, which is identified by farmers or experts or both. ASE development facilitators need to make a participatory problem assessment to list down the most critical problems that could not be addressed using the available knowledge from the scientific or indigenous knowledge domain. In principle the type of problems of this kind are not too many in number unless the development facilitators and the farmers have no access to information. Taking the opportunity of organizing the CoLF planning and review workshop, it will be very appropriate to discuss the list of problems, which will be subject for participatory research. In this meeting agreement has to be reached on the type of problems that will be addressed by the CoLFs. It is even important to identify the names of the CoLF groups who will be primarily responsible to undertake the research. The possible expert support on the subject and sources of the technical support should also be discussed in the planning session. It is however important to organize a separate planning workshop with the specific CoLFs following the wereda level and annual CoLF planning and review workshop. The results of the research will be reported in the annual PID planning and review workshop and if need be the necessary amendments will be done to redesign the research. Otherwise, if the work is completed the program office need to design a knowledge sharing mechanism to promote the result to other users.

5.1.4 Livelihood Based Literacy (LBL):

First, it is important to look at the concepts and implications of various developments in literacy programme. The three main literacy approaches which have been used for the last couple of years are traditional Literacy, functional Literacy and Psycho-social approach to literacy. The traditional literacy approach is characterized by learning the alphabet first, then progressing to syllabus and finally to constructing meaningful words and sentences. However, in functional adult literacy approach, the learner is not restricted to the reading, writing and counting skills only, but he/she is encouraged to discover functions.

In functional approach, literacy is learnt for the sake of making the person function better in his environment or community. According to the UNESCO definitions, A functionally literate person is one who can engage in activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his/or her to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his/ her own and the community's development. For instance, a functionally literate person who is engaged in brick-making, can count, read and write the records concerning the number of bricks made, their dimensions and cost of producing them in order to determine the profit margin.

The other important literacy approach; Psychosocial approach, is associated with the great Brazilian educator-Paulo Freire. The approach is problem solving, that is, it provides a framework for thinking creative, active participants to consider a common problem and find solutions. It is based on the importance of having the participants themselves choose the content of their education rather than having 'experts' develop curricula for them. After a session characterized with dialogue, a common generative theme is developed from which the reading, writing and counting is based. This approach has contributed to the development of the REFLECT (Regenerated Freirian Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques), which combines PRA within adult literacy and was started by Action AID in 1993.

Therefore, the ASE's Livelihood Based Literacy (LBL) approach integrates the concepts of both Functional Literacy and REFLECT. Unlike REFLECT, LBL is not solely intended to improve community awareness through literacy; and also not basically work-oriented like in Functional literacy. LBL is related with people's livelihoods (include social, economic, cultural and right issues of the local community).

Most of the members of the CoLF are presumed to be non-literate. As such, they need to be taught how to read and write, using the functional activities that they are expected to be involved in running the CoLF. Formerly, LBL is treated within the CoLF session and deliver at the last our of the session. However, from the field experience, it is observed that staying behind the illiterate members and realizing the literate ones have shown a negative social connotation among CoLF members. In addition, the one-hour time is also not enough to manage the LBL session. Therefore, it is agreed now to undertake LBL outside CoLF sessions - for 2hrs/session & two days a week.

5.2 CoLF Operational Procedures

5.2.1 Pre-CoLF establishment

a) Collection of information

Prior to establishing CoLF, PRA and baseline survey should be conducted to identify the major problems and potentials of a given community. This exercise will be carried out because it is assumed that ASE is just starting work in the area and it need to have the necessary information before launching a full fledge program. In case the CoLF program is thought to be implemented in the middle of the program phase (for e.g. in the new kebeles of the same weredas, as a result of program expansion), then it is not necessary to carry out a base line survey the way it is done for new program areas. The baseline survey provides information on the current situation of the locality and farming systems. Among other things, the PRA and baseline survey can be used to generate information on the following areas.

- *Economic indicators:* Production levels, income levels, ownership of assets, poverty level, and household food security status.
- *Socio-cultural indicators:* Group cohesion, gender participation, standard of living, wealth status, coping mechanisms, literacy level, access to basic social services such as potable water, health and education institutions.
- *Technological indicators:* Adoption, facilitation skills, communication skills, sustainability, networking/linkages, capacity building, access to credit, marketing.
- *Environmental indicators:* Conservation of resources, afforestation, pesticides use.
- *Political indicators:* Leadership potentials, good governance, basic human right issues that deserves attention.

However, whether it is a new weredas or a new Kebele in the same weredas, inventory of local innovations, inventory of technologies from various sources, participatory assessment of challenging problems in agriculture and natural resource management as well as conducting learning need assessment (for social learning) and market survey (to identify skill training needs) are very important procedure to start the CoLF. This has to be followed with the annual PID planning and review workshop as described above. If this procedures or requirements are not met, then the program office may not be in right position to undertake the components of CoLF as envisaged in this strategy document.

b). Sensitization meetings with the community

The starter meeting with the community is supposed to be the first one since ASE has deployed the development facilitators in the Kebele. Of course there might be some chances for ASE and the community of the respective Kebele to meet, during the time of PRA study and other interactions that would take during the period of program formulation. This will be true if that particular Kebele was chosen as a sample Kebele during the program formulation period. Otherwise ASE staff will meet the community for the first time. These types of preliminary meetings are desirable to inform the

community about the objectives and concepts of CoLF, to motivate farmers participate in the forum and determine together who are appropriate as farmer promoters and facilitators. In this meeting it is not even necessary to discuss about CBI, because that will come in to being at a later stage, as a result of the discussion and consensus expected to be reached in the CoLF. In the meeting, it is necessary to explain the roles of farmers' promoters and facilitators and what is expected of the community. This is all done with a view to solicit their support in forming the forum. The main outcome of this activity is that the community (particularly opinion leaders and local administrators) is sensitized about the goals and objectives of forming the forum and hence is supporting the formation of CoLF.

c) Identification of VLDPs/ farmer facilitators

Selection of VLDPs should take place at community meeting, attended by all interested farmers from a village. The role of ASE in the selection process is just facilitation that include aware the community about the importance of VLDPs, and limits the number of VLDPs based on the number of HHs and settlement pattern. The elected VLDPs will have a probation period of 1-3 months at which they serve the community with out any incentive. At the end of the probation period, the prospects will be evaluated and if he/she demonstrates good performance, then he/she will be assigned as VLDP.

For nominating VLDPs, the following criteria can be used:

- Living in the vicinity
- Engaged in Agriculture; be a farmer
- Education background; minimum grade 4 for men & basic education level for women
- Age range; 25-45
- Willingness to demonstrate new experiences (if possible)
- Socially acceptable
- Willingness to share knowledge to others
- High level commitment
- Good leadership qualities (if possible)
- Availability of time
- Have no additional responsibility in other social institutions (e.g. KAs)
- Marital status; married (optional)
- Not accused of any crime

Based on the above criteria, VLDPs will be elected for each CoLF by the general assembly. Intensive training will be given to these promoters particularly on communication and facilitation skills as well as the strategic directions of ASE in connection to CoLF and CBIs.

d). Identification of CoLF members

With the assistance of the opinion leaders and local administrators, ASE DFs with VLDPs convene an open meeting with members of the community. The outcome of this

meeting is expected to select farmers who are willing to enroll in the forum. During this process, DFs or local leaders should not identify CoLF members unilaterally because this increases the likelihood that some participants might not have enough motivation to learn. For ASE, forming the first two or three CoLFs in the Kebele is very critical and determinant. Unless influential and highly motivated people for learning and change are not included in the first forums, then the process of establishing the CBIs, which is indeed one of the most important strategies of ASE, will be at risk.

Among others, candidates for participation should fulfill the following requirements:

- They should be farmers.
- With expressed interest or testimony to learn new things and to share their opinions, ideas and experiences/practices to others.
- They should be able to attend the forum regularly over the entire period (probably it may extend to one year).
- Literacy is not compulsory.
- Gender balance need to be attended.

ASE development facilitators should make all the necessary efforts to include adequate number of the poor community members and women in the forums. Experience has thought ASE that, during the first community meetings the poor community members and women might remains shy for self-targeting. The DFs need to make a house-to-house visit to the poor farmers place and to the places of women headed households before the general assembly is called. They should take enough time to clarify that they need to take part in the meeting and express interest if they are selected to take part in the CoLFs. It is also very important to repeatedly remind the general assembly that the poor community members and the women headed households need to get priority in the process of election.

5.2.2 Establishing the forum

a) Group size

It is assumed that CoLF will be more effective if the members are from a single village. This enables the group members to continue the practice in the future. The size of the forum should be manageable, as large groups tend to become either chaotic or passive. Similarly, discussion and sharing of experiences may not also be adequately done if the group tends to be very small. Therefore, the recommended size of the forum is 25-30.

b) Group formation

Each Forum will be divided into four sub-groups and each sub-group will have its own group leader. All sub groups will designate their agreed names represented by local symbols. The name of each sub group is associated with the name of an object to which the group members attach high value. The name given to the respective sub group does

reflect a sense of togetherness among the group members and helps build a micro constituency.

The forum will have four committees; namely, entertainment, energizer, timekeeper, and recap committees. Each sub group is assigned to perform different tasks in a social committee. The tasks alternate among subgroups on a rotational basis. For instance, a sub group that acts as an energizer committee in a given session would assume another task in the next CoLF meeting. So do others. It is a set of leadership training techniques that assists groups to analyze their formation and management. It also helps members critically analyze their roles in a group and the community. In addition, it opens up an opportunity for others to articulate their views and execute courses of action together in a cohesive manner. Moreover, It will be a venue to stimulate the democratization of the whole processes and more transparent decision-making, which are a basis for a cohesive and organized group action.

The forum members will develop their own motto and songs. They will use the motto and songs during the opening and closing of the programme. As it is observed in the pilot FFS project, in Bereh Aleltu, the daily activities always begin with blessings that are delivered by clan elders. The inclusion of such practices in the forum activities gives inspiration for members to respect each other and tightens the social bond that exists among the group members. Therefore it is wise to use the existing social capital to reinforce group cohesiveness.

c) Conducting Learning Need Assessment (LNA) and KAP analysis

It was described above that a range of information has to be generated before seeing the proper CoLF become fully functional. The Learning Need Assessment and KAP analysis are particularly relevant to identify the learning topics that need to be entertained in the social learning sessions. This is very important to help the CoLF get started as soon as possible. The other information such as inventory of the local innovations, inventory of technologies, market assessment and skill training need assessment could be carried out once the CoLF is launched.

The LNA and KAP are very important tools to enable the participants identify their gaps (knowledge, attitude and practice) and analyze the causes, and propose the solutions as well. ASE DFs need to be trained on these tools ahead of time and the attention of the project officers to this activity is also very crucial. A special meeting has to be organized at weredas level to analyze the results of the Learning Need Assessments and the KAP analysis. In the weredas level meeting it is very important to identify the most pressing needs and come up with a few but very decisive topics for the social learning forums. From experience, ASE has learned that usually, a very long list of learning needs appears in such meetings and it is difficult to accommodate all, neither do they have equal value in the eyes of the community. Moreover it is very expensive and time consuming to address all issues, even if ASE is willing. It is therefore important to focus on a few social topics which are believed to be very critical and which are also believed to have greater impacts in changing the economic and social fabrics of the community.

One of the advantages of prioritizing the learning needs at this level is that ASE will be clear as to what type of learning materials and audiovisual supports to prepare. Such materials could serve for the entire program period. Again, experience has thought ASE that it has good stock of reference materials for skill training purposes while the learning materials and audiovisual supports for social learning topics are not adequate. Of course, the learning materials, if available any, will help the DFs to develop their knowledge and understanding of the matter. But it has to be underscored that there should be different mechanisms to stimulate discussions and facilitate learning on the selected topics, even if such learning materials are not available. For example, inviting guest speakers, identifying and sharing case studies and live cases etc are few to mention. The program offices and the responsible department in the head office need to pay greater attention to make sure that enough learning materials and audiovisual supports are available for use.

d) Developing work plan

Based on the outcomes of LNA/KAP studies, the CoLF members will prepare a realistic work plan. The work plan may include several things but at any time of the year the CoLF should be able to specify the followings:

- The date and time of the weekly CoLF meeting.
- Location of the forum
- List of CoLF members
- Developing by-laws and learning norms
- Activity schedule
 - Selected social topics for learning
 - Selected local innovations to be developed further in the PID sessions
 - Selected new technological entries to be tried in the CoLF
 - Selected problem issues to be researched
 - Selected Skill training needs to be undertaken over the year
 - LBL related activities
- Provision of local resources will be specified
- Source of finance will be indicated (If possible, specify cost/breakdowns).

Further operational planning is expected from the CoLF to work out details of the selected activities mentioned above. For e.g. if a PID experiment is planned to take place on exotic poultry breeds, then the plan should include information on - How many people to take part in the exercise? Who will be the lead innovators? What exactly is to be investigated? What type of data/ information has to be collected? Who has to do that? What will be the role of ASE DFs? How will the feedback be presented in the CoLF? (How frequent, by who, what methods to use etc).

Similar type of planning is also required to the adaptation experiments of new technologies and others types of PID experiments mentioned above. Care has to be taken not over burden the CoLF with a number of PID activities, as this will affect the expected integrated and comprehensive results the CoLF exercise. At any one time the

CoLF may have a maximum of one experiment for each PID components, meaning - one case from the promotion/development of local innovation through joint experimentation, one case on conducting adaptation trial on new entry technologies and one case from conducting participatory research on critical agricultural challenges. However if the CoLF found it relevant, for example to do more experiments on local innovations than the other types of the PID components then, ASE DF should be flexible enough to accommodate the needs.

5.2.3 Running the forum

Practically speaking the forum has two major functions, not four. These include social learning and PID. The Skill enhancement and entrepreneurship development is a kind of activity that has to be coordinated and delivered at wereda level. The role of the CoLF is to recruit the trainees and to learn from the good practices of the trainees' ones the business is started and succeeded. It might also be used as a source of issues for experimentation, if need be. Otherwise the skill enhancement component is not part of the day-to-day business as much as the other components are. Similarly, The LBL session is treated outside CoLF to give more time to illiterate farmers to learn the reading, writing and counting skills. Therefore, The LBL session is organized in consultation with the CoLF members in terms of deciding the date and number of hours per session. Practically, One may complete the LBL session if he/she attends a minimum of 104 sessions. That means the LBL trainees have to attend effective 2hrs weekly sessions for a year - long. Therefore, the PO is expected to manage the duration flexibly with out compromising the quality.

To undertake the activities of the two regular components, the CoLF group must meet once every week for a minimum of three hours. In the first few CoLF sessions it is presumed that the plans of actions are already dealt with the members and other preparatory tasks are already taken care of. At that stage, every member is clear that which social learning topics will be the subject of interest for the CoLF and what kind of PID experiments will be considered during the year. Therefore the following section tries to demonstrate how the forum could be organized at any one time of the program period, assuming that the planning sessions are already carried out in the previous sessions.

a). Socialization: Ones the CoLF members are all present, there will be some time to socialize - such as getting mix together, raising and talking about some social issues at individual level etc. This is an adult education program and it is absolutely important to address adults the way they are most happy with. It has to be different from the strict classroom disciplines, which is often applied in the formal system. This is also the moment the group voices the solidarity slogans and songs.

b). Introduction: The facilitator needs to introduce how the session is planed for the day. It is also important to introduce guests (if any) who are invited to speak in either of the session. The CoLF members need to be encouraged to make changes on the planned activities, if need be. Otherwise they should adopt the plan by expressing views of endorsement. One of the cultures that need to be developed in the CoLF is free

expression of views and ideas. The more the communication happens to be one way (often from the facilitators' side) the more the group management will be despotic. This is completely undesirable and the facilitators need to make efforts to prevent such a culture from taking place. Although the level of empowerment as well as the value system of the people matters a lot in this regard, the role of the facilitator to make the desirable changes happen is significantly important.

c). Identification of assistance to the facilitators: These assistances are those who will be responsible to keep time, to energizing the group, to entertain the group and more. It has been customary in ASE working areas to form the groups at the beginning of the forum establishment but the roles of the groups were changing every week. For example a group that works as a timekeeper this week may be changed in to energizer the other week. At this point in case, it is important to pay attention to the gender balance.

d). Recapitulation of previous sessions: As part of the group task, one recapping committee will be assigned for each session. This will help to remind the participants about the important topics mentioned in the last session but also to introduce briefly those who were not present in the last session. It is important to encourage those who do the recap, to put the major points in writings so that the CoLF facilitators can keep it as a CoLF document. In case the persons who are asked to do the recap are illiterate, then the facilitators have to be responsible to document the reports. Having done this, it will be very easy for the facilitators to show visitors what the forum was dealing with in the past.

e). Social learning: The time that needs to be allotted to this session depends on the sensitivity of the issue and urgency of the upcoming agricultural topics to be dealt in the PID sessions. Nevertheless, 1.00 - 1:30 hrs is ideally recommended for the social learning session. The advantage for this session is that the social learning topics are already few in number and these topics could remain on the agenda of the CoLF for the whole year, with out being disrupted by the changing agricultural seasons. More than the other components of CoLF, ideally, the social learning session has adequate time. Therefore it is important to take in to account that the social learning topics should not be discussed on the expense of the other CoLF activities - PID. However when the issue is exceptionally important or when the guest speakers demands more time to deal with the issue, then the facilitators can use the PID session for the social learning purpose. Several techniques, which are also attached as annex of this document, could be used to facilitate the social learning. The bottom line issue is however that the knowledge and experiences of the people in challenging some of social evils must get greater importance in the process of learning.

f). Participatory Innovation Development/PID: The PID activity has to be carried out based on the agricultural seasons. As described above it is recommended to carry out crop related activities during the main cropping season while livestock and natural resource management works could be considered in the dry season. However this is not a rule and the community may change the schedule as long as they have more convincing reasons. Basically some farmers will be responsible to take the lead in the PID experiments. In case the entry point for the PID is a local innovation, then the

innovator will be on the lead. During the course of the PID work several activities can be carried out. These include:

- Making small groups and pay visits to the experimenters and discuss progress on the spot
- Small groups bring back issues to the plenary after the visit
- Inviting innovators or farmer researchers to the forum for discussion and learning
- Visiting the works of farmer researchers in other kebeles or woreda sites or research centers or technology centers else where, to exchange knowledge.
- Plan and re-plan experiments, through organizing discussions in the forum.
- Monitor progress through having presentations by the lead experimenters and exchange ideas based on the preliminary results
- Organize village level workshops with researchers, experts and other guests
- Share results of the group or individual experiments and try it in own farms and discuss the impacts in their livelihood and the environment. This is a very important task of the forum and it has to be the dominant function, after having registered some results in the innovation processes. With out this task carried out by the forum members, the approach will remain similar to the conventional research where people do experiments but never use the results in their own work.
- Discuss and try to solve new challenges in agriculture that may emerge incidentally. The importance of the CoLF kind of study groups is not only to deal with "formally identified experiments" by the forum, like mentioned above. But also to develop the inquisitive nature of the farmers and researching capacity of same. Apparently every member is expected to have an innovative spirit so that to over come challenges he or she may encounter in the course of life. Every member has to be encouraged to report back his or her experiences to the forum for discussion and group learning. The facilitators of the forum have to give extremely high importance to this kind of practice and should also try to find out any kind of incentive to recognize the good works of farmers. This is extremely important aspect of the CoLF that helps ASE achieve its goal of community empowerment.
- Organize group experiments in the mode of FFS, particularly to address the problems of crop pests and diseases, livestock problems (e.g. tsetse).
- Send representatives to the annual CoLF workshop and identify issues that should be reflected in the workshop by their representatives on their behalf. Apparently the forum has to take time and make priorities, discuss issues and recommend.
- Send representatives to the wereda innovation platform to discuss on selected theme at wereda level and discuss the feedback in the CoLF.
- Participate in annual innovation fairs through sending representatives and show cases to the fair.
- Documentation of PID processes and results using various means. The CoLFs may insist the use of videos if they feel like they can do that work by their own or with the assistance of others.

- Participate in local radio programs to share results of their experiments and the work organization as well as experiences of the forum. In places where community Radio is available, the CoLFs are expected to play significant role in making contribution for public education from the social learning processes, the PID activities and the SEED.

Theses are only some of the possible works that could be accommodated in the PID sessions but more innovative practices could take place when suggested by the members and the facilitators.

g). Livelihood Based Literacy/LBL: Mainstreaming LBL into CoLF is another important aspect of this practice. It will be treated outside CoLF sessions and handled by LBL facilitators. The target group for LBL is CoLF members who are not able to read and write and have no numeric skills. The LBL period will take place outside CoLF session and the literate members of the CoLF are not expected to take part in this session.

The LBL is mainly taking the approaches of FAL and the program office has to make sure that it has enough LBL facilitators. The facilitators are expected to spend effective two hours in every session and all examples used to learn how to write and read should reflect the issues rose during the social learning or PID session. It is also important for the facilitators to follow the regulations of the government on literacy programs (adult education programs) and every effort has to be done to relate it with the regional programs. On average, with in a year long time all the illiterate members are expected to be able to read and write very well. ASE has to make some reading materials available to encourage the reading skills of the learners. The facilitators may also ask farmers to use their writing and reading skills in the course of the CoLF activities.

5.3 Certificate of recognition

After one year, the CoLF members will be awarded certificate of recognition. This phase does not indicate that the learning practice is completed and CoLF members will separate; rather it is just a step where by the support of DFs will be minimized and participants will continue the learning and sharing experiences by themselves. ASE and government extension agents are expected to monitor and give back-up services to the graduate forums. Because of this reason it is highly important to involve the government development agents and other staff from the start.

The PO may use the following indicators/criteria to decide on the time of certificate award:

- At least 80 % of the planned one year social learning sessions completed,
- The SEED participants completed the training & at least 50% of them engaged in business activities,
- At least first round results obtained from PID activities,
- 80% of LBL attendants able to read and write; and have basic numeracy skills.

CoLF members who have gone through the entire session (may be for one year depending on the number of sessions/ issues handled) and have met the group norms and conditions will be given certificate of recognition. During this event, on top of certificates, prizes will also be awarded for successful participants. Some of active CoLF members will facilitate new CoLFs at their respective Kebeles/villages. ASE is expected to provide a well-organized training to the CoLF facilitators both in the beginning of the year (when they work as assistances of ASE development facilitators) or after one year (when they are expected to facilitate the groups independently). Those farmers who might have failed to follow up the CoLF activities properly because of several reasons, and who are still interested to continue being part of the CoLF may join the new CoLF groups in the second year program.

5.4 Role of actors in implementation of CoLF

To make the implementation of CoLF effective, the role and active participation of different actors are vital. Below the role of important actors are indicated:

Community Based Institution

- Coordinate and run the forum,
- Administer /oversee the CIDEF money,
- Facilitate forum members identification/selection – ensure enrollment of poor and marginalized community groups in the forum,
- Organize CoLF review workshop,
- Participate in selection of members for Skill enhancement and entrepreneurship development,
- Arrange learning & sharing visit programs among forums,
- Initiate and participate in monitoring and evaluation of the forum,
- Devise a mechanism (together with ASE) how to sustain the CoLF in the future.

Wereda sector Offices

- Assign technical experts for special CoLF sessions,
- Give recognition to the CoLF and respect the programs (not to be overlapped with some government development schedule like Safety net),
- Allow the CoLF to utilize the FTC,
- Arrange a learning avenue between FTC trainees and CoLF participants,
- Deliver important learning materials for the forum,
- Participate in monitoring and evaluation of the forum,
- Scale up good practices of the forum,

Kebele Administration

- Facilitate and arrange a learning venue for CoLF,
- Participate in members identification/selection,
- Follow up the implementation of CoLF,
- Arrange a public meeting (with CBI) for sharing the outcome/findings of CoLF,

- Respect the bylaws of the forum and support its execution,
- Participate in monitoring and evaluation of the forum,

ASE PO

- Sensitize and familiarize all concerned bodies about CoLF at Kebele and wereda level,
- Support the forum both technically and financially,
- Ensure all important actors participation and support to the forums,
- Organize M&E events and ensure participation of all actors,

6. Monitoring and evaluation of CoLA

It is crucial to develop M&E frameworks and tools for PLA. This will help to analyse cost effectiveness, sustainability, empowerment and impacts of PLA on rural food security and poverty reduction. The framework indicates the objectives, purpose, result, indicators and key actions by theme as follows.

6.1 CoLA Objective:

- Develop capability and self-esteem of the local people to achieve enhanced and sustained livelihood and natural resource management.

6.2 Purpose, Result, Indicators and Key actions by theme

6.2.1. Establish and managing own Training center

Purpose:

- Promote and institutionalize participatory learning and action approaches and tools at local and national level.

Results:

- Enhance skills of field officers and facilitators (including farmers) on participatory development (ASE, GO, CBI)

Result indicators:

- Training center established and equipped
- Availability and access to training materials & aids
- Number of topics covered
- Number of trainees enrolled
- Annual enrollment rate (against capacity)
- Financial sustainability (The center is expected to be 100% self financing)

Key actions:

- Provide infrastructure and facilities
- Develop training materials and aids
- Promote, coordinate and run training
- Generate funds (for expansion)
- Post training evaluation

6.2.2. Community of Practice**Purpose:**

- Promote inter-agency learning and sharing on areas of community learning and action

Results:

- Developed and advocated enhanced models in community learning and action

Result indicators:

- Initiated and established a vibrant national CoP
- Enhanced coordination and harmonization among partners
- Varied practices consolidated, harmonized (methods/tools) and advocated

Key actions:

- Identification and develop of directory of partners
- Initiate establishment of network and facilitate workshops
- Develop and upload data base
- Develop a community learning model/ approach
- Dialogue and advocacy

6.2.3. Knowledge Management**Purpose:**

- Bring intra and inter generation, validation, documentation, sharing and using of knowledge

Results:

- Enhanced institutional learning and performances

Result indicators:

- Improved internal learning behavior, policies and practices
- Number of GBN practices identified and analyzed

- Knowledge management (documentation & communication) system in place and active

Key actions:

- Inventorize and document available knowledge / practices
- Organize internal learning / sharing training / workshop
- Sharing to partners through established forums/networks
- Establish and improve soft ware and operational procedure

6.2.4. Community Learning Forum

Purpose:

- Enhanced livelihood and self-worthiness

Result:

- Bring an integrative and participatory learning for exemplary development changes

Result indicators:

- % HH resilient at times of shock
- Change in HH income (& nutrition) - food secured
- Change in productivity
- Reduced level of HTPs
- Gender equity & equality
- % of literate people (from enrolment in CoLF)
- Enhanced local participation (# of meetings and advocacy agenda)
- Change in the physical outlook of the environment (improved in NR base)
- Number of innovations / research activities carried out
- Number of innovation/research adopted (number of HHs)
- Number of HHs trained (reach)
- % of trained HHs adopted improved practices
- Number of HHs reached through diffusion (farmer-to-farmer extension)
- % of Population enlightened (rights)
- Branding CoLF to ASE

Key actions:

- Develop strategy and guideline
- Learning needs assessment
- Develop learning materials and aids
- Training/ workshop
- Forum formation and management
- Review and evaluation

6.2.5. Scaling up

Purpose:

- Promote wider use of evidence-based practices to bring about broader impacts

Results:

- Increased influence and impact of ASE at wider scale

Result indicators:

- Number of advocacy papers prepared & documented for advocacy
- Number of scaling up projects prepared and funded
- Number of proven practices advocated and (% taken)
- Level and number of advocacy and influence events (local / international)

Key actions:

- Identify and work for advocacy agendas
- Develop and deliver advocacy papers
- Assess impacts

6.3 POST CoLF evaluation

With special emphasis to CoLF, as ASE's research & extension approach, Post CoLF assessment will be conducted some years following the graduation of good number of CoLFs in the program area. The program office in consultation with ASE management can decide the timing. It is probably important to involve outsiders so that to reduce biases of own staff as well as make use of fresh inputs to the program. It aims at learning how effectively the CoLF is engaged in facilitating development and fighting poverty in practice. In general it is important to see how the CoLF helps in the generation, accessing and sharing of knowledge/technologies that work better in the context of the farmers and its contribution to the local economy and the environment. It is also particularly important to see how ASE should develop the methodological approach further and scale it up in the country for much broader application.

The following are some indicators that can be used to measure the outcomes and impacts of CoLF:

- Number of farmers who have developed innovative attitudes and behaviors,
- Implications of the innovative behavioral changes in influencing the Kebele administration and development works,
- Number of innovations developed by farmers or with the support of others, which were effectively adopted by several farmers in the community,
- Number of problematic issues solved by the CoLF groups,
- Attitudes of partners such as research organizations and regional/zonal/wereda extension organizations on the capacity changes of farmers,

- Number of non-CoLF members who benefited as a result of sharing knowledge and technology from CoLF members,
- Changes in productivity and income of CoLF members,
- Changes in improved environmental management and community responses to climate changes,
- Extent of community behavioral changes on the key social issues that were believed to negatively affect the economic, ecological, and social environments of the community,
- Extent of influencing the works of the government Development Facilitators, particularly the FTCs,
- Changes in the literacy rate/percentage in the community,
- Changes on food aid dependency,
- Resilience of the community to counterchallenge shocks (social or natural),
- Standard of living (access to good health, good housing, better clothing and so on),
- Cost effectiveness of the program (running a CoLF),
- Responsiveness to gender issues: Addressing the needs of both women and men, with particular attention to improving gender balance as a result of focusing on women, in traditionally men dominated community,
- Easiness or complexity of the methodology,
- Capacity of ASE staff (including leadership and forefront development workers),
- Monitoring skills, methods, practices and documentation of lessons.

7.0 Community Innovation and Development Fund strategy and guidelines

ASE has been engaged in facilitating the establishment of community-based institutions at grass root level since 2001. Formation and functioning of CBIs has been taken as ASE's overarching strategy that facilitates to achieve the anticipated results in community empowerment. This strategy is also crucially important to speed up ASE's institutional transformation, from a service-delivering organization to a community-empowering one. To realize this, ASE has designed a new working modality that further enables CBIs to exercise and strengthen their management capacity; Community Innovation and Development Fund (CIDF).

CIDF is a block grant of money that will be made available to the CBIs to help them learn how to write project proposals, implement development projects, handle accounts, and prepare reports. In general, manage partnerships with development partners like ASE. But most practically, the fund is aimed to support the innovative, technical and institutional initiatives of the community (groups and individuals) and the collective needs of the community, which were not duly addressed while developing the main programme document.

7.1 Purpose:

Enhanced project development and management capability of the community and provide alternative financial access to the poor and disadvantaged, and local innovators

7.2 Result:

Improved access to financial services (grant) to critical community innovation and development needs

7.3. Eligible groups and areas/activities

The primary users are poor and disadvantaged community groups such as women and land less youth. The fund may be used to address critical development needs and issues. These may include the following activities:

Promote local innovations and technologies: The fund for this purpose may be used: to buy materials so that to help farmers develop local innovations/IKs of their choices, to help farmers buy technological inputs which are required for testing/experimentation purpose, to help farmers organize field days or farmer workshops so that to disseminate results and share experiences, to learn new ideas from other places as a result of experience sharing visits etc.

Economic and social infrastructures: These may include activities such as small-scale irrigation, Alternative Basic Education/ABE for children centers, Health posts and rural water supply schemes etc. When such needs come from the community, the CBI leaders at Kebele and wereda level are expected to review it from the stand point of equity, necessity, cost effectiveness and so on. The community is expected to cover at least 10% of the total cost of the requested infrastructure. Care has to be taken that this kind of support is not a source of conflict for the community members because of lack of transparency and unfair judgment.

Support establishment of economic enterprises for CBI: The CBIs are encouraged to have an income generating enterprise for financial sustainability. The fund with this regard can be used for developing and running enterprise projects.

Education, training and experiential visits: The CBI may claim to train /or arrange a visit program to CBI leaders or some members on selected areas. The fund therefore will be utilized to cover transport, allowances and related costs.

Revolving credit fund: This is a very important scheme that supports the realization of ASE skill enhancement and entrepreneurship development endeavors in the program area. ASE as per the new strategic direction will invest more on upgrading skills (both agricultural and non-agricultural skills) and develop entrepreneurship skills of the communities particularly, with a focus on marginalized groups such as women and landless youth. It is strongly believed that following the skill enhancement trainings; the trainees need some amount of start up capital to run their own business. Therefore, ASE as a primary option will make its maximum effort to link these community groups with the existing MFIs or saving and credit cooperatives. If this option fails, or partially succeeds because the MFIs are willing to give credits to the so-called "credit worthy" groups, then ASE has to make the CIDF available. In all cases the fund users must be encouraged to make their own contribution to start up the business, which will be indeed considered as expression of interest.

7.4. Proposed models for revolving fund management/financial intermediation

In principle, channelling NGO funds to the community in the form of revolving funds is not either clearly prohibited or encouraged by the government. Experiences tell that there are a number of presidencies in the country where government and non-government organizations are providing credit to farmers in the form of revolving funds. It is therefore important for the program office to use either of the following options to deliver the service to the community.

Option 1: There are a number of NGOs or GO affiliated MFIs established and serve the communities in the rural areas. Each MFI has its own criteria to sign up clients. From experiences, it is understood that ASE main target groups (poor and marginalized community groups) are less likely to be served by the existing MFIs. The CBIs, having received the money from ASE, may enter in to collateral arrangement with these MFIs (e.g. PEACE) to address the targets in a "managed fund" arrangement. Managed fund

arrangement is a kind of business partnership one may enter with financial institutions. In this arrangement the financial institutions administer the funds allocated by their non-financial partner organization, in accordance to the principles and guidelines of the non-financial partner (of course with out contradicting with the government financial regulations) and for which the non- financial partner organization would pay an agreed amount of service cost to the financial institutions. The CBI may channel part of the CIDF to these MFIs to serve the target groups. The detail arrangement may be worked out with the partner MFIs.

Option 2: The multi - purpose cooperatives established at the rural areas are serving the community in different ways such as availing the required inputs. Such cooperatives are also mandated to provide credit services to their members. They can also provide financial services to others in a mode "managed fund" arrangement, as a result of entering partnership with non-financial organization like CBI/ASE. With these types of cooperatives, which may operate at Kebele level, CBI may enter a special arrangement so that part of the CIDF will be given to the cooperatives to serve the target groups. Apart from supporting the works of the cooperatives, this kind of arrangement is very helpful to improve the relationship of the CBIs and the cooperatives. On the other hand the CBIs may enter another agreement with the Cooperatives to run the social and environmental development works, which the cooperatives are expected by law to carry out using their 15% profit, which could be possible donated to the CBIs.

Option 3: If there are no multi - purpose cooperatives in the operational areas, or if the program office is convinced with this option, the CoLFs may be encouraged to form a saving and credit association at Kebele level and then a union at weredas level. In this case, the first one or two CoLFs established at Kebele level may form the saving and credit cooperative and the other CoLFs that may be established in the subsequent years could join the saving and credit cooperative at a later stage. However the importance of the cooperative is to be able to administer the funds that could be donated by the CBI or other organizations to the coop. In this case the CoLFs will remain as a learning and action group and the reason they come together as a cooperative is to access the funds and pay loans. In this scenario the source of funds will be the CBI and the CBI should develop principles and procedures on how the funds should be utilized by the Cooperatives. This will provide an opportunity for creating a strong linkage between the CoLF/ Cooperatives and the CBIs

Option 4: CBI managed revolving fund: There is a precedence with in ASE that the CBI can administered the revolving funds through channeling it to individuals and groups through the Kebele CBIs. The CoLF leaders will be responsible to provide the credit funds and collect the loans back. The CBI is in a position to get the revolving funds from donors (ASE, local government and others) as well as by generating income from enterprises, which are owned by the CBI. This option sounds to be the best one in terms of maintaining the inherent close links between the CBI and the CoLFs but the program office have to make sure that this option falls within the legal framework of the regional government where they are operating.

From the above given options, option three sounds to be applicable with out being challenged by legal restrictions and technical complications. ASE encourages all POs to use this option unless the program offices have enough justifications to move to other options. Anyhow, choosing the best option that fits to the local context is left to the program offices. The program offices may also come up with a new model that fits to their own circumstances. However, they have to make sure that all the principles of ASE empowerment program and government regulations are respected.

7.5. Implementation procedure

7.5.1. Designing a call

Prior to engaging the implementation phase, ASE will sign MoU to CBI. The Apex CBI is responsible to make a call for proposal. The call has to be posted in public places like ASE, CBI & KA office board both at wereda & KA level. On top of this, the Apex and KA CBI has to announce the call in public meetings. Moreover, ASE Development Facilitators need to make announcements during CoLF sessions. The call can be done twice a year – at the beginning of first & third quarter of the year.

Interested applicants have to come directly in person to the Apex or KA–CBI office and collect the application form/project idea format (Attached in Annex 3). The application form is filled and submitted to the CBI office within a period of two weeks starting from the date of the call.

7.5.2 Appraising the proposal

7.5.2.1 Establishing Appraisal committee

A project appraisal committee will be established which is represented by CBIs, relevant government line offices and ASE/program office. The committee will have six persons that comprise two from CBI board, two from concerned government Offices, one from ASE/PO and a CBI manager. The committee will have its own chairperson and secretary. The committee will properly document. The representative from the CBI should be board members but other than the executives. Because the Board executives are the ones who approved the decisions of the appraisal committee at later stage. The CBI manager is an ex-officio member and secretary of the appraisal committee.

Experience has taught ASE that the representatives from the government office could be assigned on temporary basis because the expert that should join the appraisal depends on the nature of the project. However, the POs may also have a permanent committee and whenever they need a specific technical support the committee may ask some experts to make the assessment.

The major role and functions of the committee will include:

- Set fund appraisal criteria for selection of projects;
- Officially accept proposals from apex CBI for appraisal;
- Select eligible projects and send approval letter of the selected projects for CBI PO to access the fund.
- Follow up and evaluate the ongoing and completed projects and submit report to the CBI Board concerning the fund utilization.

7.5.2.2. Project appraisal principles

The Committee may use the following principles while screening the project proposals:

- Pro-poor: projects that focus on addressing the needs of the poor and marginalized groups.
- Gender sensitive: projects that thrive to address the practical and strategic needs of women.
- Simplicity: projects that consider implementation capacity of the project holder (be it group or individual). It should be a kind of project that could be easily shared to other community members because of its less complex nature.
- Innovativeness: More innovative projects should get priority. Innovativeness in this case refers to newness to local context that adds value to the economic and social activities of the community
- Build on IK /local innovation: Projects that bases the available knowledge, resources and practices of the local community.
- In terms of economic enterprise (as mentioned above) the committee need to pay attention to - feasibility, simple to mange, contribution to fill development gaps and compliance with the local government rules and regulations
- Sustainability: projects that are economically feasible, socially acceptable, environmental friendly and technically viable.

7.5.2.3. Fund requisition procedure

The following steps should be followed strictly:

- The CBI will prepare a general proposal and request ASE to access the grant fund - CIDF.
- ASE/PO will evaluate and approve the proposal.
- The CBI will enter agreement with ASE to access the fund.
- The fund will be transferred to CBI account in installment bases (bi-annually).
- The CBI will receive a project idea/proposal from individual or/group (in case of PID and Business activities) or KCBI (in case of community development micro projects) as per the format attached here in Annex 3.
- The project initiated by the apex CBI will also submitted to the appraisal committee for appraisal.

- The collected project ideas/proposals will be submitted to the appraisal committee for appraisal.
- The CBI secretariat has to screen, select and compile eligible projects and submit to appraisal committee
- The appraisal committee will meet and evaluate the proposals as per the set criteria.

N.B. Every project idea prepared by the KA & Apex CBI should have to be put into standard project format (attached in annex 4). ASE/PO may technically assist them on how to write a project proposal. This will help them to improve their project writing skills and there by lay the ground to develop proposals and sell to other donors. However, individual/group project ideas not necessarily important to put into standard project formats.

7.5.3. Approving appraised proposal and fund release procedure

The CBI Board will give the final approval of the funds for selected projects. The fund release procedure will follow the following steps.

- CIDF appraisal committee will write its decisions on the prepared format (attached in annex 5) and submit to Wereda CBI;
- The Wereda CBI board will meet and approve the appraised proposals; and send it back to the CBI secretariat for action.
- The CBI secretariat will prepare a MoU to be signed by all concerned bodies who has a stake in the management and utilization of the fund such as ASE/PO, Apex CBI, concerned government Office, KCBI and individuals/group;
- The CBI secretariat will release the fund to approved projects after the fulfillment of all the necessary administrative and financial preconditions.

N.B. The Wereda CBI will transfer the money to KCBI if the project is executed at Kebele level. However, if the project is implemented at Wereda level, the apex CBI will be responsible for the overall management and utilization of the fund. KCBI will enter into agreement with individuals/or groups who are project holders in the Kebele. In most cases the KCBI has to give much of the responsibilities to the CoLF facilitators and the group as a whole.

7.6. Monitoring and evaluation

- ***Monthly monitoring and reporting:*** The KCBI will submit a monthly report to Wereda CBI that reflects the status and performance of each approved projects. The CBI secretariat Office will monthly monitor the approved projects on the spot. It shall update and communicate to ASE PO and concerned government office whenever their involvement is found essential.
- ***Quarterly review, learning and action:*** The Wereda CBI will submit quarterly financial and technical report to ASE PO and concerned government sector

offices. The fund appraisal committee will monitor the approved projects in quarterly bases.

- *Annual review at ASE level:* The performance and implementation of CIDF will be presented and discussed in Annual ASE review meeting. The CBI has to exercise auditing yearly and submit the audit report to ASE & concerned government office.

7.7. Terms and condition for fund application

The CIDF can be used in two forms – Grant and Credit. Each will be discussed as follows:

7.7.1. Grant:

- Eligible projects are those in the interest of the larger community or their institution such as Community development/CBI enterprise projects, PID activities and training/education and visit Programmes.
- Grant should be provided to approved projects whose benefits go to the wider people or their service institutions.
- The size of the grant per project depends on the nature and relevance of the project itself. It should not however over Br 50,000 for Kebele level projects and birr 200,000 for projects run by apex CBI per project.
- The size of the grant for a given PID project is not over birr 2,000 and birr 10,000 for individual and group projects, respectively.
- Community enterprise projects should be cost effective. Minimum they should generate adequate positive return that will keep them operate and grow. Only the fund helps to finance the investment cost.

7.7.2. Credit

- Eligible projects are those in the interest of private enterprises development (individually or in group):
- Loan size depends on the nature and relevance of the project. However, maximum loan size for individual applicants not to exceed Br 3,000 and for group applicants Br 20,000.
- Requires interest on capital (to cover administrative cost, default cost and inflation) – the important here is creating access to lowering interest.
- The CBI depending on the nature and type of the project will decide the repayment period and payment modality.

7.8. Role and responsibility of concerned bodies

ASE / PO

- Include CIDF in its main program document

- Training and technical assistance in project development and management
- Sign project agreement with apex CBI
- Disburse funds based on agreement
- Monitor and report on funded projects
- Organize joint review with partners

CBI / Apex

- Promote availability and access to CIDF
- Design and familiarized a call for proposal
- Announces call for proposals
- Coordinate and facilitate development of project proposals
- Submit proposal to ASE for fund acquisition
- Collect proposal and submit to CIDF appraisal committee for appraisal
- Endorse appraised proposal by BoM (three office holders – chairperson, secretary & vice chairperson.
- Sign agreement with ASE/PO and project owners
- Manage disbursed project fund as per agreed terms and conditions
- Coordinate internal experience exchange visits
- Monitor and report progresses to ASE/PO
- Submit audit report to ASE & concerned government office

CBI / Kebele

- Develop own public service projects and receive private proposals
- Pre-screening or both proposals and submission of eligible ones to apex CBI
- Ensure enforcement of agreements made between apex CBI and project owners
- Monitor and report on progresses

GO line offices

- Technically assist project development and management
- Take part in appraisal and review

CoLF

- Announces call for proposals
- Encourage innovative farmers to respond to the call
- Provide technical assistance for those who want to apply for the fund
- Involve in disbursement and collection of the revolving funds
- Exchange information and collaborate with the KCBI to settle irregularly.

Please find the Logical framework matrix below to see the objective, purpose, result indicators, Means of verification and assumptions.

CIDF Logical framework matrix

Purpose:

- Enhance project development and management capability of the community and provide alternative financial access to the poor and disadvantaged, and local innovators.

Result:

- Improved access to financial services (grant) to critical community innovation and development needs.

		Result indicators	Means of verification	Key actions	Assumptions
	CIDF				Availability of fund, favorable government policy, Commitment of the community/CBI
		# Local innovations developed / research funded	Financial statements, proposals and reports, appraisal minutes, observation, review / evaluation reports	- Develop CIDF guideline - Allocate CIDF - Training / workshop - Fund management - Review and evaluation	
		# Community projects supported			
		# of people benefited (reach)			
		# of business projects funded (and sustained)			
		# of people supported			
		Repayment rate			
		% default (delinquency)			

Tips (Adapted from Participatory Learning book)

Tips for Farmer facilitators

- Motivate group members to express their feelings, opinions and experiences in the forum.
- Be helpful to your group members to articulate the message conveyed by DFs.
- Encourage the group in mobilizing resources to be used in experimentation of innovations.
- Be helpful to present and articulate the problems and concerns of your group members to DFs.
- Simplify and interpret technical information to understandable local language.

Tips for Development Facilitators

- Be sensitive to participants' religious or cultural needs. These may have implications in the way of addressing certain issues such as dealing with harmful traditional practices. You are not the one to judge certain practices are bad or harmful. Your role is just to provoke the issue and help them to come to share decisions and takes actions.
- Demystify your role as facilitator. Unless the group understands your role, they will probably view you as an authority and will not see that they have to take responsibility for their own learning process. Keep reflecting back to the group their need to take responsibility for learning.
- Being a facilitator does not mean that you are qualified to be a psychotherapist. Take great care when participants reach out to you, either directly or indirectly, with their emotional needs.
- Build-up participants' self-esteem. If you do not let participants know when they are doing well, then they will not be able to reinforce the good things they are doing.
- As a facilitator, you have to guide self-reflection and give feedback immediately. Whenever you offer feedback, give praise before offering negative comments and only criticize the performance, not the person.

Tips for Project Officers

- Ensure that the CoLF is taking place at village level, and should be based on practical local problems.
- Ensure that the learning should place a strong emphasis on problem solving and decision-making. Problems are discussed and alternative solutions appraised.
- Encourage cross learning /sharing of experiences among CoLF groups at community level. This helps community members to develop confidence in analyzing and finding solutions to local and /or regional problems, by giving a broad base to their expertise.
- Encourage wereda level reflection workshop. CoLF members should be encouraged to make presentations of outstanding performances of their group activity to groups of local people as well as to each other.

Annex 1: Knowledge tracking in Agriculture and Gender

1. Good Practice

1.1. According to the judgment of your organization, please list down at most five recommended “good practices” in the area of sustainable agriculture and gender [please mention the practices in order of importance]

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

1.2. What are the bases for your judgment (give statements of parameters which justify those practices as “good”?)

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

1.3. What are the concrete added values of those practices? Please use the following indicators to show the impacts of the good practices in the system you are operating in. [HML: stands for High, Medium and Little]

Added values of the five GPs to the system

Indicators	GP ₁			GP ₂			GP ₃			GP ₄			GP ₅		
	H	M	L	H	M	L	H	M	L	H	M	L	H	M	L
- Improve productivity (crop, livestock, forest, fish)															
- Improve sustainability (lowers undesirable effect to the environment/ecology)															
- Simplify complexity															
- Improve fitness of technologies to local realities (Appropriation)															
- Reduce costs															
- Improve income															
- Improve the economic, social, political position of women.															
- Enhance empowerment of farmers															
- Influence policy & practice changes in sustainable agriculture and Gender															
- Role changes in Gender															
- Improve diversification of Agricultural products															
- Enhance quick recovery of marginalized lands															
- Create more opportunities for Agricultural Entrepreneurship															
- Improve marketing of Agricultural products															
- Others															

1.4 Please complete the following knowledge analysis framework to provide insight on each GP [please refer to the following explanations to help you complete the table]

Central Concept: the main knowledge body that drives the practice,

Corresponding practice in the conventional system: The type of practices in the conventional system, which has been improved as a result of the GP.

Method of Application: Any specific technical or mechanical supports used to put the practice to work [Example: Machineries, tools, infrastructures, application techniques etc]

No of people using the GP: Approximate number of people who appreciate and use the GP in your operation area

Knowledge analysis framework

Good practices (GPS)	Period Introduced	Central Concept	Corresponding knowledge in the conventional system	Method of Application	No of people using the GP (approx)	Remark
GP ₁						
GP ₂						
GP ₃						
GP ₄						
GP ₅						

2. New Practices

2.1. Out of the five (at most) good practices mentioned above, please list down those new practices that have been innovated by your organization or adopted from else where, but with significant modifications to make it fit to the reality of farmers.

(Please put \checkmark mark where ever appropriate in the following table)

Good practices	Own/institutional innovation	Farmers innovation	Adopted practice with remarkable modification	Remark
GP1				
GP2				
GP3				
Gp4				
Gp5				

2.2 Please complete the following tables to give insight about the different types of new practices of your organization [please refer to the following explanation to help you complete the tables]

Driving force for the innovation: The reasons/forces behind, that causes the innovation to come

What makes it innovation: The new elements observed in the practice

Source: the institution or person/s the knowledge was shared from

Modification Made: The new practices or knowledge that was added to the adopted practice so that to make it fit to the local realities

2.1.1 Own /institutional innovation

Type of innovation	The driving force for the innovation	Time taken to put the innovation to work	What makes it innovation (new elements)	No. of people using the innovation

2.1.2 Farmers innovation

Type of innovation	Name of farmer/s who innovate	Driving forces for the innovation	The new elements in the innovation	No of farmer using the innovation practice

2.1.3 Adopted practices with modification

Type of practices	Source	Period in the diced	What modification made	Who made the modify	No of per using it

3. Bad practices

3.1 List down at most three practices which you are not happy with and which you might not repeat it in the same way, if you are given a second chance to do it.

- a.
- b.
- c.

3.2 Please complete the following table to elaborate the Bad practices (BP) more

List of Bad practices	Reasons why they are considered bad	Sources of the practices	Recommendations for other users
BP ₁			
BP ₂			
BP ₃			

3.3. What are the undesirable effects/impacts noted as a result of the bad practices

3.4. How did you come to realize the badness of those practices

- a. As a result of internal monitoring exercises_____
- b. Findings of external evaluation_____
- c. Resistance of farmers to use it _____
- d. Others [specify]_____

3.5 What are the lessons you have learned from those practices?

PO KM team marking tool

The different GBN practices, which are collected, from the Development centres/CoLFs should have to be summarized by the PO KM team. The PO KM team comprise of PO director and project Officers. The following matrix can be used:

Name of KAs	Suggested GBN practice	Assessment criteria used by DCs/CoLFs	Assessment parameters set by the PO KM team	Recommendations			
				Accepted as a learning stuff	Suggested to be placed in the web site	Returned back to the DCs/CoLFs for more empirical evidences and clarifications	Not relevant
KA 01							
KA-02							
KA-03							
KA-04							
KA-05							
KA-06							

Annex 2: Participatory Learning methodologies and techniques

In training adults, we should follow the adult learning principles and use participatory training methods and techniques as much as possible. In practice, the effects of a certain training method/technique will vary strongly with the:

- Context in which it is applied
- Combination/variation of technique with other techniques.
The effect of a certain training technique may change or be strengthened (or weakened) considerably when applied in combination with other techniques (e.g., lecture with audio-visuals and buzz groups); and
- Variation of training techniques
Variation can include changes from passive to active, from abstract to concrete, from exploring new ideas to integration with existing knowledge, variation from plenary to small group work, or from lecture to practical work.

Considerations in selecting participatory training methods/techniques

Methods refer to the systematic procedures of doing something while techniques refer to the skillful manipulation of things – which are both tools for learning.

Each training/learning method/technique has its own special features. So when preparing a training activity, the trainer/facilitator has to make decisions about which methods/techniques will be most appropriate for a particular training/learning event. Questions that may be asked are:

Does the method:

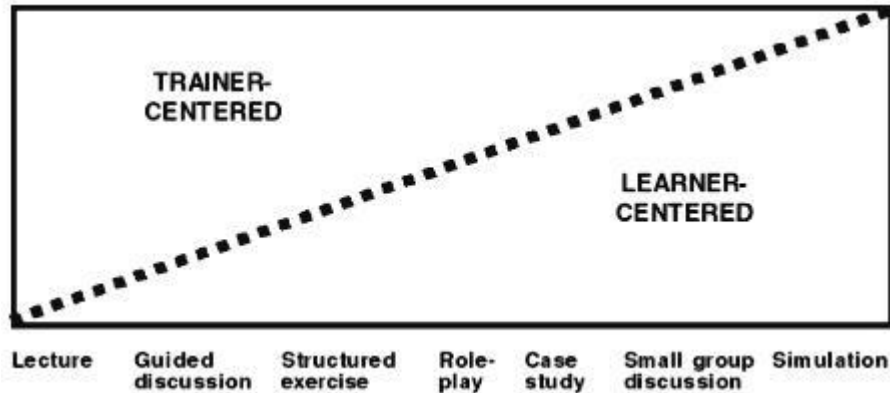
- Provide for feedback?
- Relate to experiences of participants?
- Provide for motivation?
- Provide for individual evaluation?
- Respect adult learning principles?
- Trigger wider applications?
- Allow for individual differences?
- Encourage learner initiative and autonomy?
- Provide for repetition and exercises?
- Provide for a variety of activities?
- Provide for interaction? and
- Encourage communication?

Other questions to be asked are:

- Is this technique applicable with the resources available and is it cost-effective?
- What are the available resources (preparation time, implementation time; specific facilities, materials and equipment, specialized trainers/facilitators, etc.) and what are the resource requirements of the technique that the trainer/facilitator wants to apply?
- Is this technique efficient in realizing the learning objective under the present conditions?

- Are the trainers/facilitators able to handle the method/technique? and
- What are the expectations of the learners?

Training/learning methods can be placed on a continuum from trainer-centered to learner centered as illustrated below:



Selected methods that enhance participation

1. Community conversations

The main objective of community conversations is the creation of interactive spaces within communities in order to generate a response to specific problem (e.g. HIV/AIDS, which integrates individual and collective concerns, values and beliefs; and to address individual and collective attitudes and behaviors embedded in social systems and structures (UNDP, 2004).

Community conversations generate decisions and agreements. The development of skilled facilitator is critical for the successful implementation of community conversations.

Most of the social learning issues are bound to the culture and tradition of the societies. This kind of issue though perceived as ill practices, people are not opted to speak openly. This is mainly because the issues are deep rooted and have been practiced by the community for long. Therefore, the facilitator should have to be careful in dealing with such issues.

The following procedures may help to undertake community conversations:

1. The issues first come from the community itself as a learning topic: The facilitator is expected to provoke the community well to capture the most pressing social issues.
2. Once the issue is identified, the first session would be allotted as a brainstorming exercise. Give a chance to the CoLF members to reflect their views on the subject. Here the community may reflect diverse opinions. The facilitator by no means do not take side, rather provoke them to reflect their rational. At this 1st session, do not expect a consensus on the issue. At the end of the session, tell the members to further digest the issue with themselves (be it with neighbors or family members) and come up with concrete evidence (if possible, that justify their argument - e.g. practical cases happened in the neighborhood or some where else) for the next session.

3. In the mean time, the facilitator should make his/her own preparation through referring books or asking others to better understand the issue. If possible prepare a live cases that better explain the issue at stake.
4. On the next community conversations session, the facilitator will first present the point of differences raised in the previous session by the members.
5. Ask first the members whether they have raised and discussed the issue with others such as family members and neighbors. Give them a chance to whom they have discussed and how the discussion was. This has to be live and interactive – encourage adults to give the whole picture of the discussion.
6. Ask the members to reflect on what they have heard – members presentation.
7. Ask the members again who have changed their mind (from their previous perception) and why.
8. In the course of dialogue, the point of difference will be narrow down through time and hopefully finally they will come up with consensus. However, until they reach consensus, the dialogue session can be continued for more sessions.
9. Ones the CoLF member reached on consensus, the next issue to be dealt is how can they are going to entertain the issue. Knowing the issue is not enough by itself. The members are expected to concretize it and come up with some sort of decisions.
10. The decision will be drafted by the facilitator as the outcome of the dialogue and presented to members to be endorsed.
11. Finally, a mechanism has to be defined to follow on their decisions.

N.B. The outcome of the dialogue sessions should be shared to the public through arranging a meeting days with CBI and KA. Members of the CoLF are expected to reflect the whole process of the dialogue and inform their final agreed points/decisions. One single event may not be adequate to convince the public so that an informal discussion should be continuously delivered by members at different places such as coffee ceremony, attending church, funeral, market places, farming and so on.

2. Case study

The participants analyze (in-depth, and often in small groups) one or more descriptions of real life situations and experiences. The case study method is particularly useful:

- For developing insight in future work situations;
- To convey information outside the experience of the participants; and
- To strengthen the diagnostic and problem solving skills of the participants.

The case study method can be implemented in various ways, among others:

- The "description" may be oral, written or recorded (audio tape, audio-visuals);
- The cases may be prepared by the participants themselves and/or by the trainer/facilitator; and
- The complexity of the case study may range from a simple description of a real life incident to a description with extensive data sets of a complex situation.

Resource requirements vary with the type of case studies one is dealing with. Preparation time will vary from very short (participant cases prepared on the spot) to very long (trainer prepared complex cases based on sets of research data).

Conducting a Case Study

When you have determined the objectives of the training session and have decided that the case study method will achieve those objectives, you write or select an appropriate case study. If it is a written case study, the learners can be given the written materials to read either before the session commences or during session time. One advantage of the written case study is that it is given to individual learners who can then prepare it in their preferred way and at their own pace. If the case study depends on a film or video, then the learners will most probably have to be briefed as a group.

Once the learners have digested the information they can then turn their attention to the questions. This activity requires the learners to analyze and synthesize the information. Following their deliberations the learners can then provide the answers. You have two options here:

1. The learners can respond individually, either verbally or in writing. If the standard in the training objective specifies that each trainee have to demonstrate a certain level of skill, then you will have to opt for this alternative.
2. The learners respond as a group, usually via a discussion. Even if it is to be a group discussion, you will find it helpful to have the learners write down ideas individually first. The group discussion often enhances learning as the sharing of ideas provides a rich source of data and comparison.

When you are satisfied that the learners have achieved the desired training objective; the usual concluding steps of review, clarification, and tying up loose ends can be covered. We recommend that the trainees be provided with a written summary of the main points.

3. Simulation game

Participants take part in a game that simulates real-life interactions and processes in a controlled and simplified way. Then they analyze the outcomes and interactions of the game.

The main function of simulation games is to develop the participant's insight into complex processes and interactions. Simulation games are especially important when in reality there is a long time lag between causes and consequences of the real-life situation.

A simulation game needs careful planning and preparation. Implementation of a well-developed game is relatively easy to handle. Implementation is time consuming, but can be very rewarding and can open completely new learning perspectives.

4. Role play

Participants examine the nature of certain real-life and job-related roles by adopting and acting out these roles in a training situation. The role-play method is particularly useful for:

- Developing participant's flexibility and understanding of other views and one's own attitudes vis-à-vis those other roles/positions; and

- Developing skills in-group works, negotiating skills, creativity, and leadership and supervision skills.

A variety of role-play modalities exist (e.g., with open roles, with prescribed roles, role plays with one or with various phases). Role-plays fall into two main categories. The first (called preplanned) is basically an extension of a case study. Here the problem is acted rather than just described. Trainees who are playing roles are given role description (or briefings) while the other learners are given detailed observation guides that indicate what they should look for during the role-play. All participants receive a background statement. The roles that learners are asked to play are clearly detailed and may be quite different from the learners' usual behavior.

The second category of role play (sometimes called spontaneous) happens when a learner is given a role in which he and she basically plays himself or herself, but "tries out" certain new behavior to expand his or her range of responses. For example, during a session on counseling, a role-play may follow a discussion of empathy. A learner is asked to act as a counselor and to display as much empathy as possible. In the absence of further role definition, the trainee will usually behave as he or she normally would, except for attempting to increase his or her empathetic behaviors. For spontaneous role-plays, role briefings are minimal, but detailed observer's guides are required.

The preparation and implementation of a role play bears low cost and is relatively easy to handle.

Conducting a Role Play

A standard pre-planned role-play usually proceeds as follows:

1. The trainer introduces the role-play, concentrating on setting the expectations of the learners and promoting an atmosphere of trust. He or she checks that all learners understand the background of the situation, that the role players understand their roles, and that the observers understand their guides.
2. The role-play is enacted. The trainer/facilitator encourages learners to stay in-role (if necessary), checks that the observers are working, steps in if the role play goes off target or becomes too traumatic, and stops the play at an appropriate time.
3. The trainer/facilitator conducts the post-play discussion, which is a critical stage in learning from a role-play. First, learners are "de-roled." This involves expressing feelings that are created in the role situation. This is an essential step if the role player is to objectively analyze information that will be fed back to him or her by the observers later in the discussion. The leader seeks answers from the group to a set of questions that should probe the information obtained by the observers. Crucial aspects of the learning experience are isolated and highlighted and may be related to an appropriate theory.

5. Problem-posing materials

Problem-posing materials are concrete presentations of an issue or problem familiar to all, about which the participants have strong feelings. These materials can take many forms: a drawing, drama, slides, posters, (part of) a video.

Why do we use problem-posing materials

Problem-posing materials are used to encourage participants to open up on sensitive issues, and change previously fixed opinions and ideas. Use of such materials contributes to a deeper change of attitude.

Examples of problem-posing materials

- Slide series (e.g., showing the different trends in extension)
- Poster (e.g., showing a village scene)
- Role-play (e.g., showing bad interview)
- Small plays (e.g., emphasizing a gender issue etc).

How do we use problem-posing materials

Using problem-posing materials should always be done in two steps:

- Watch, study and/or experience the problem-posing material; and
- Conduct critical reflection in a group.

After the group has seen or experienced the problem-posing material, through discussion, we can moderate critical reflection.

First, focus on describing and analyzing what the participants' saw. Then, challenge the participants to look at their own situation. The reflection may follow these steps:

- Description - what happened, what did you see, hear, feel?
- First analysis - why did this happen?
- Link to real, own life - has this happened to us? Do we have similar experiences?
- Related problems - what problems do these lead to?
- Root causes - what really causes this in our work, life? and

Action, solutions - what can be done, what are the alternatives?

6. Small group discussion

Up to six participants cooperate in a small group to discuss a certain topic and/or perform a certain task. Small group work is generally followed by reporting and exchange of the results of the group work. Group discussion is often combined with other methods (interactive lecture, case study, etc.). Small group discussion needs good preparation (instruction, reporting) and suitable localities. This method is especially suited:

- For topics in which participants have some experience and knowledge;
- When the objective is to raise interest/involvement of participants in the topic;

- For "digesting" new information by discussion or execution of a group task; and
- For developing of skills in teamwork, problem solving, and decision-making.

7. Interactive lecture

Lecture is the one-way communication of a prepared talk, sometimes accompanied by a period of questions and answers at the conclusion. Lectures appear to be an efficient training method, as little time is spent on discussion. However, learning is not guaranteed through lectures. Lectures are useful for introducing new subjects or presenting summaries or overviews to participants. They are often combined with visual aids, such as slides and /or overhead transparencies. Even in training Programmes on participatory methodologies, some lecturing will be needed.

Despite these merits, lectures have many disadvantages. A lecture is usually delivered as a monologue and does not take into account the individual needs and interests of learners. For the learners, the main disadvantage is that creative and reflective learning is limited. As a result, many lectures are extremely tedious and boring for both the learners and trainer/facilitator.

To avoid falling in to the trap of talking and hoping the audience, use the following checklist before you start.

Lecture checklist

- Are you using lectures for those occasions when other methods will be less useful to your participants?
- Have you limited your talk to no more than 20 minutes?
- Does your talk have a clear beginning, middle and end?
- Do you always keep to simple key points?
- Do you support your talk with a clear handout?
- Do you know your own body language mannerisms and how these affect the lecture?

8. "Fishbowl"

The "fishbowl" method is an excellent way to enhance participation during discussions.

The mechanics of the "fishbowl" method are:

- Form two circles (an inner and an outer) using eight chairs. The remaining participants sit outside the circles;
- The inner circle represents a fish bowl with fishes;
- The outer circle are the observers/listeners;
- Only seven participants sit in the inner circle, so there is an empty chair; and
- The participants in the inner circle discuss a topic. If participants in the outer circle want to participate in the discussion, they have to join the "fishes" and occupy the empty chair ("jumping fish"). But, after participating they return immediately to their chair in the outer circle.

The "fishbowl" method is advantageous because it:

- Allows discussion of many topics;

- Helps to break shyness of participants;
- "Jumping fish" idea invites participation;
- Peaceful way of discussion;
- Good for sharing experiences and many ideas emerge;
- Limits over-participation; and
- No interruption in expressing one's self.

9. Song Analysis

Song analysis is a very creative way of conveying information. It is fun yet effective. The key is to be able to choose a song that can be used to start discussion of the topic. The facilitator can also use original lyrics fit into a familiar melody to ensure its relevance to the session.

Procedures

1. Choose a song or make a song relevant to the topic/content.
2. Ask participants if they know the song. Sing the song with the participants.
3. Ask the participants to review the lyrics of the song and share insights that they can derive from it.
4. Process the ideas shared.
5. Relate these insights to the actual experiences and situations of the participants.

10. Story Telling

People are fond of stories; therefore, story telling is one of the creative methodologies, which can be used. Stories are very powerful in influencing individuals, especially if they can relate with the situations depicted in the story. It will also be easy to draw insights to introduce topics and raise issues.

Procedures

1. Choose or make a story relevant to the topic to be discussed,
2. Prepare the materials needed,
3. Introduce the purpose of the activity; objectives of the session,
4. Discuss guide questions if any,
5. Tell the story to the participants,
6. Ask participants to share insights based on the guide questions,
7. Process/synthesize the responses,
8. Relate these insights to the actual experiences and situations of the participants.

11. Buzz

During longer session, the plenary group can break into sub-groups to discuss one or two specific questions or issues. The forum soon fills with noise as each sub-group 'buzzes' in discussion. If appropriate, after the discussion one member of the group can report its findings to the plenary. Buzz groups can be in pairs, trios, or more depending on the activity. People turn to their neighbors for a quick buzz, or form larger groups of three or more. This allows

almost everyone to express an opinion. While they are 'buzzing', participants are able to exchange ideas and draw on their wide collective experience. It may provide a good opportunity for trainees to reflect on the content of a lecture. A good buzz session will generate many ideas, comments and opinions, the most important of which are reported back. By contrast, questions and answer sessions at the end of the lectures commonly involve only a few people, and intimidate shy. Your role as the facilitator is to watch time and manage feedback concisely.

Buzz groups are helpful for trainers/ facilitators as they allow you to:

- Draw your breath;
- Gauge the mood by listening to some of the discussions;
- Change the pace of the session;
- Encourage the participants to reflect on what they have learnt and how they might apply it in their work.

The main obstacles in using buzz sessions lie in unfamiliarity with their use, the time required, and the need for competent leaders or facilitators within each sub-group. In particular, feedback may take time. One-way to shorten this is to encourage participants to shout out key suggestions and ideas randomly in plenary. Another way to organize feedback is to have one group present their ideas with other groups only contributing.

12. GROUP DISCUSSION

This can be used:

- When your learning objective incorporates thinking and reasoning critically, exhibiting independent thinking, or improving communication and/or social skills.
- When benefits may be gained through learners' "discovering" content for themselves. Using this approach improves recall and motivates future learning in some trainees.
- When the group size is appropriate. This may vary from 4 (where everyone knows something about the topic and will contribute) to 15 (where some trainees have little knowledge of the topic and you need little depth in the discussion). On most occasions, 6 to 8 participants is optimum.
- When you want to monitor individual progress. A discussion provides an opportunity to give individual attention and to promote remedial learning if necessary.
- When you want to form or change attitudes. Personal involvement in a group and public commitment to opinions become powerful agents for changing attitudes, and a discussion can promote both involvement and commitment.
- When learners have some knowledge of the topic. (Discussion of mutual ignorance will not enlighten anyone).
- When content covered per unit time is not critical. A discussion is seldom time-efficient, the justification for using a discussion is that the quality of learning counter balances the additional time that learning may require.
- When you are skilled in leading discussions.

Preparing a Discussion

You begin the discussion when you start planning it.

- Decide your objective for the session. What specific learning outcomes should be session achieved?
- Decide whether in the current training situation a discussion is the appropriate method to achieve the objective.
- Write a session plan.

Types of Discussion Plan

The Content-Focus Plan

The amount of detailed content you write into your session plan will vary according to your objective, your clarity in defining the content of the discussion, and your confidence in your skills as a discussion leader.

The Broad-Focus Plan

As you become more confident in your discussion-leading skills, particularly in your ability to generate appropriate questions on the spot and your ability flow with and effectively use contributions made by trainees/learners, your discussion plans will usually become less detailed. Note that:

- A behavioral objective is still given
- Timing is carefully planned
- Introduction and conclusion are still outlined in some detail
- Thought has been given to the content areas that are most likely to emerge.

The Strategy-Focus Plan

For some training/learning situations, the actual content of the discussion may receive little planning effort. For example, if the objective is to modify attitudes, the skilled discussion leader will carefully plan the process of the discussion in order to build up a total experience for the participant that is likely to produce changes in attitudes.

Some Tips

- For good motivation, choose topics that are recognizably important to learners.
- Master all relevant content yourself. (Explore any additional material that you think may be introduced by the learners, even if it is not part of the session plan.)
- Choose topics that trainees have some knowledge of. (You can build the discussion directly on a previous session, or set assignments or written reports before the discussion.)

CONDUCTING A DISCUSSION

Using Questions

Basically, in a discussion you are a guide. You should show enthusiasm for the topic and for learners' contributions. At the beginning, you should generate learner enthusiasm with an interest-getting question, a trigger film, a news report, a case situation, or even an outlandish statement. In addition, you should generate contributions by posing questions. Questions should be:

- Initially thought-provoking and open-ended, allowing several possible responses.
- Directed initially at the whole group.
- Redirected to individuals chosen randomly if no one has volunteered an answer after several seconds.
- Rephrased (or re-expressed in "component-part" questions) if you get 110 answers to the original question.

You can also use questions to tactfully handle incorrect answers. You can

- Ask for clarification,
- Ask for rephrasing in an acceptable form,
- Indicate partial correctness before asking for comments on incorrect aspects,
- Use probing questions to lead a trainee to "discover" the wrongs of an answer,
- Ask other trainee to comment.

Guidelines

Here are some general guidelines for conducting the discussion and maintaining interest and a cooperative atmosphere.

1. Keep the discussion on a clearly defined topic. You can do this by keeping the session objective firmly in mind (even displaying it in front of the group). You can use summaries to emphasize and focus on what has been covered and what is left to be covered. When your objective is to change attitudes, keep the discussion on target by moving through your planned discussion process.
2. Arrange the seating so that each participant can see all the others. This arrangement allows better use of non-verbal cues.
3. Try to create an atmosphere of cooperation and support in which learners feel free to contribute. Use nickname. Reward positive contributions, both at the time they occur and afterward, by attributing them to their source when you are summarizing. Reward mutual support activities by learners.
4. Summarize during and at the end of the discussion in order to emphasize major points and to evaluate progress toward the objective.
5. Continually observe trainees for feedback that indicates their degree of understanding of the discussion. (For example, look for frowns, nods.)
6. Encourage the behavior of answering questions by rewarding answers before dealing with the rightness or wrongs of the content of the answers. (For example, "Thanks for giving us that information. Now, Let's think about it in relation to...")

Visual Record

If it is possible, it is usually a good idea to create an ongoing visual record as a discussion progresses. The main benefits are:

Every trainee can see at a glance the main points covered so far. This prevents backtracking, and also points the way ahead. The discussion will be much more focused.

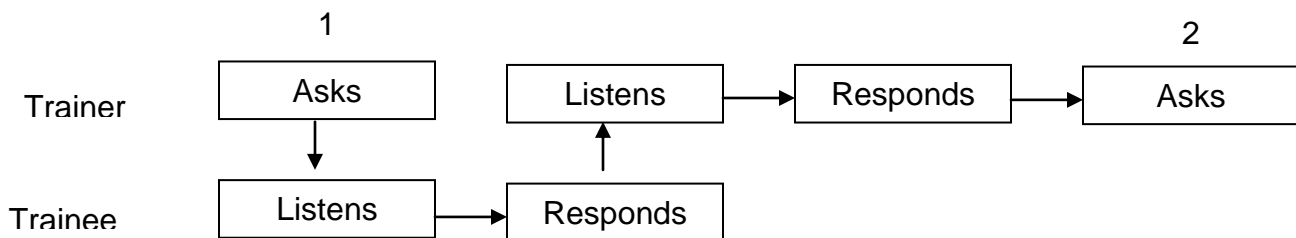
The act of writing a contribution into the record is a simple and a powerful reward, providing the trainee feels the contribution is his or hers. To encourage this ownership, use the trainee's own word(s) if possible. If not, obtain the trainee's agreement to the word(s) you finally record.

The need to summarize contributions into short phrases (for recording purposes) encourages attentive listening and reflection of content, which often serves the important purpose of thoroughly clarifying meaning for every participant in the discussion.

13. THE QUESTION-AND-ANSWER METHOD

QUESTIONING...

- One of the most basic and important skills that you can use;
- Good questions make the difference between passive trainees learning poorly and active trainees learning for themselves;
- Is a particularly appropriate technique when you are working with mature learners, who often bring to a training session useful skills and/or information that they are willing to share if you encourage them
- Also used to direct and control a discussion;
- Is dynamic that develops through exchange;
- The trainer/facilitator asks a question and the learner listens; the learner responds then the trainer listens; the trainer then responds.



Two broad categories:

Open (General)

(e.g. "What are the causes of conflict in your area?")

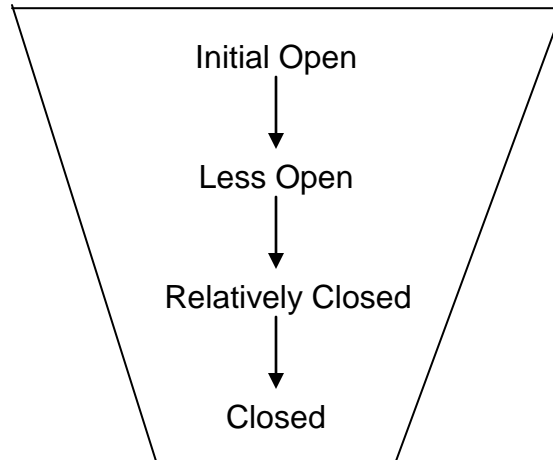
- Is quite open because the trainee can draw from a wide area of information in order to answer.

Closed (Specific)

(e.g. "How many lives were lost in the recent days of conflict?")

- Is relatively closed because there is a limited area from which to draw an answer.

Funnel-Shaped Series of Questions



Questioning Techniques

1. The overhead questions

- Ask the question
- Wait for a trainee to volunteer an answer

In effect, you leave the question hanging over the trainee's heads. This technique stimulates thought and, because the trainees are unsure of who is to answer, tends to make the entire group think.

E.g. "What are the different kinds of training methods?"

2. The direct question

- Name the person to answer
- Pause (count to 2)
- Ask the question

This technique helps to discipline the "talker" or the "sleeper", and you can also use it for the "shy person". By stating the name first, you ensure that the person hears the question, and so you avoid potential embarrassment.

E.g. "Kebede." (Pause.) "What do we do before starting a regular session?"

3. The combined question

- Ask the question
- Pause (count to 3)
- Name a person to answer

In order to gain the involvement of learners but avoid a lengthy pause while learners wait for someone else to volunteer and answer, you can use a combined question. You first pose e.g. "What are the basic concepts of learner-centered education?" (Pause) "Ashenafi"

4. The relay question

- A learner asks the trainer/facilitator a question,
- The trainer /facilitator relays this question back to the group.

Quite often, of course, the learners will ask you a question. Remember, we have said previously that it is better that the learners discover information for themselves than for the trainer/facilitator to give it to them. You can use the relay question to give trainees the opportunity to discover information already within the group.

E.g. Alemitu: "What is the purpose of studying training methods?" Trainer: "Chala, what do you think is the purpose of studying training methods?"

5. The rhetorical question

The rhetorical question needs no answer. It is fairly clear that the person who posed the question is going to supply the answer, or, alternatively, feels that the answer is so obvious that it needs no elaboration.

E.g. "What is wrong with us today?"
"Who would like to finish the session early?"

Do's

- Distribute your questions equally among the learners.
- Use the direct question for the inattentive person.
- Use easy questions at the start of the session (to get the group used to answering questions successfully) and for the shy or quiet person (to encourage participation).
- Include questions (fully expressed) in your session plan.
- Rephrase your question if a learner does not understand it. Try to avoid the temptation to answer the question yourself. You can rephrase a question with simpler words, relating it more directly to an idea the learner already understands, expanding it with some explanation, or breaking it down into component stages or questions that can be answered sequentially. Alternatively, you could redirect the question to another learner.

Don't s

- Don't question the group in a regular order (for example, from right to left around the room).
- Don't use long, involved questions.
- Don't use leading questions. These you can often identify because they can start or end in "don't you? For example: "You always identify your topic first, don't you?"

The leading question provides the answer and therefore has little use as a learning device. Don't confuse this kind of question with the useful kind of lead a learner to discover information or concepts.

- Don't overuse yes/no questions. These give limited response variety and have a 50/50 chance of being answered correctly. You can effectively use a yes/no question to get a "sleeper" involved initially. Then you can ask the sleeper to justify his or her answer.
- Don't use ambiguous questions. These are questions that are open to different interpretations. They usually generate confusion and/or argument.

THE TRAINER LISTENS

In the training situation, the trainer/facilitator must listen actively. You have three important goals to achieve while listening:

- To identify the meaning of what the learner is saying.
- To encourage the learner by indicating that he or she has your attention.
- To promote listening and listening behavior by everyone in the group.

Listening then is an active, goal-directed process that must be practiced to achieve competence.

THE TRAINER'S RESPONSE

Assume that you have asked a question and a learner has answered. The way in which you comment (provide feedback) on the answer will influence how much the trainee learns from the question-and-answer exchange, and will affect the likelihood of that trainee's answering questions in the future. The future answering behavior of other trainees will also be affected.

Guidelines for effective responses to maximize learning and motivation:

- Highlight both good and poor of an answer,
- Make your comments on poor answers - answer-oriented rather than person-oriented. For example, "The objectives of the session were not achieved because the method used was not appropriate..." rather than "The objectives of the session were not achieved because you were too lazy to prepare for it."
- Make your comments on poor answers quite specific, and suggest strategies for improvement based on techniques or concepts already mastered by the learner.
- In your response, be realistic and objective, and try to ensure that your response is perceived as realistic and objective.
- Follow feedback from you to the learners with an effective listening behavior, so that the learners can express his or her own perception of the learning problem.
- Modify your response to suit the situation
- Finally, always try to reinforce the behavior of attempting to answer a question.

14. THE SKILL SESSION

Skills – the characteristics or qualities within a person that enable that person to do a task.

Task – part of a job; make up a series of skills.

Job – a purposeful assembly of tasks and their related skills.

Types of Skills

1. Psychomotor skills – the most basic type of skill that involved gathering information (usually by sight) and acting on it (usually with some type of muscle movement).
2. Procedural skills – psychomotor activities linked in a series because some activities must be performed first before others.
3. Diagnostic skills – the third and most complex type of skills, which involved diagnosis. All forms of trouble-shooting and problem definition involve diagnostic skills. Then main learning aid is a logic chart, or algorithm.

When planning a skill session break down the task into a series of closely linked steps of physical activity. If the learner practices this series over and over he or she will become more proficient at the task (as measured in time and quality). Consequently, the basis of any skill session is a task analysis – a breakdown of a task into skill steps.

Task Breakdown – is usually written directly from information gathered during a training needs analysis. It is basically a step-by-step definition of the task, arranged so that each skill step is a building block on which to place the subsequent skill steps. Adequate performance of all steps ensures adequate learning of the task. In addition, the breakdown should support each step with explanatory points, which answer the “how,” “why,” “when,” and “where” and describe as well the vital “skill” involved in the task.

Structure of the Skill-Session Method: Simple Task

1. The Introduction

- **Orient.** Announce the topic of the skills session, and then show trainees how this particular task fits in the whole system.
- **Motivate.** Why is the session so important? Why should the trainees perform the task in the manner you have specified? Answers to these questions must be logical, and not just “because the instruction manual says so”! Show the trainees that the acquisition of the skill to do this task is important to them. If they do well, the system will operate more successfully and their jobs will be easier.
- **Measure current knowledge.** This is most important. How/(Do you know that your trainees can prepare vegetation compost in organic farming activities correctly? Do they have the basic skills?

- **State complete training objective(s).** State the objective(s) clearly and precisely. Always try to include a time standard within which the trainees must complete the task. This gives the trainee something concrete to aim at and makes it easier for you to judge whether or not your instruction has been successful.

2. The Body

- **Show.** In short, you do the task as set out in the task breakdown within the time limit set in your objective.
- **Show and tell.** Show and tell each skill step as set out in the task breakdown. Emphasize particularly difficult and tricky parts. Stress each skill step, and pause between each so that the trainees know the every skill step has a separate identity.
- **Check of understanding.** This is the initial feedback (for both of you and the trainees). A useful technique here is to ask the trainee to name each skill step. You can actually perform the task to the trainees' instructions.
- **Practice.** Trainees should practice at least 50 percent of the total time allocated for the body of the session.

3. The Conclusion

Briefly review the steps and key points (using questions). You can write these on the board for emphasis. Encourage trainee participation throughout the conclusion.

Annex 3: Project Idea format

የጋራ ልማት ፕሮጀክት ሀሳብ ማቅረቢያ ቅጽ

የፕሮጀክቱ ስም _____

የፕሮጀክቱ ዓለማ _____

ፕሮጀክቱ የሚከናወነው ቀበሌ _____ ማደር _____

የፕሮጀክቱ ተብቃሚዎች ወንድ _____ ሴት _____ ደምር _____

የፕሮጀክቱ ባዕታ _____

ለፕሮጀክቱ የሚያስፈልጉ ግብረቶች _____

የፕሮጀክቱ አብቃላት ወጪ(ብር) _____

የፕሮጀክቱ ወጪዎች በዝርዝር

ተ. ቁ	የሰራው ዝርዝር	መለኪያ	ብዛት / መጠን	የገንዘብ መጠን (ብር)	ምርመራ
1.					
2.					
3.					

የገቢ ማሰባሰቢያ ፕሮጀክት ሀሳብ ማቅረቢያ ቅጽ

የፕሮጀክት ስም _____
 ፕሮጀክት የሚከናወነው ቀበሌ _____ መገደር _____

የፕሮጀክቱን ሀሳብ ያመጣ ግለሰብ ወይንም የቡድን አባል ስም ዝርዝር

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

ስልጠና የተሰጠበት ወቅት _____ ቦታ _____ የሰጠው አካል _____

የፕሮጀክት ዓላማ _____

የፕሮጀክት ሀሳብ በዝርዝር

- የፕሮጀክት ስፋት/መጠን መግለጫ
- የፕሮጀክት ግብዓቶች የሚገኙበት ቦታ መግለጫ
- የአካባቢዊ ተስማሚነት መግለጫ
- የገቢ ደርሰው መግለጫ
- መገደብ ደጋፊ የሚገኙት ዕድሎች

የፕሮጀክት ጠቅላላ _____

የፕሮጀክት የማሻሻያ ካፒታል (በገንዘብ፣ በዓይነት፣ ወይንም 1.) ከግለሰብ/ከቡድን 2.) ከደጋፊ ሰጪ አካል፡-

ለፕሮጀክት የሚያስፈልጉ ግብዓቶች _____

የፕሮጀክት ዋና ዋና ተግባራት በዝርዝር

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

የፕሮጀክት ወጪዎች በዝርዝር

ተ. ቁ	የሰፊው ዝርዝር	መለኪያ	ብዛት/ መጠን	የገንዘብ መጠን (ብር)	ምርመራ
1.					
2.					
3.					

የቀበሌ ማኅበረሰብ መመዘኛ መድረክ አስተባባሪ አስተያየት _____

የቀበሌ የሕብረተሰብ ልማት ተቆም መሪዎች አስተያየት _____

የፈብራሪ ሥራ (ብልሃት) ማበልጸጊያ ፕሮጀክት ሀሳብ ማቅረቢያ ቅጽ

የፈብራሪ ሥራው ስያሜ _____

የፈብራሪ ሥራው የሚከናወነው ቀበሌ _____ ማዳሪር _____

የፈብራሪ ሥራው ባለቤት/ግለሰብ ስም/ የቡድን አባላት ስም

1. _____ 3. _____

2. _____ 4. _____

የፈብራሪ ሥራው ታሪካዊ አመጣጥ

የፈብራሪ ሥራው አሁን የደረሰበት ደረጃ

የፈብራሪ ሥራውን የማበልጸጊያ ሀሳቦች

ስራው ሲከናወን ይገኛሉ ተብለው የሚጠበቁ ወጠቶች

በፈብራሪ ሥራው ብልጸጋ ላይ የሚከተሉ አካላት ስም ዝርዝርና የስራ ድርሻ

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

ለፕሮጀክቱ የሚያስፈልጉ ግብሃቶች

የፕሮጀክቱ ወጪዎች በዝርዝር

ተ. ቁ	የስራው ዝርዝር	ሚዛዥ	ብዛት/ መጠን	የገንዘብ መጠን (ብ.ብር)	ምርመራ
1.					
2.					
3.					

የፕሮጀክቱ ማስካሄጃ ወጪ ምንጭ (ብ.ብር)

- 1.) ከግለሰብ/ከቡድን - በዓይነት _____
 - በገንዘብ _____
 - በጉልበት _____
- 2.) ከድጋፍ ሰጪ አካላት - በዓይነት _____
 - በገንዘብ _____

የቀበሌ ማኅበረሰብ መሞሪያ መድረክ አባላት አስተያየት

የቀበሌ የሕብረተሰብ ልማት ተቆም መሪዎች አስተያየት

Annex 4: Standard project proposal format

የጋራ ልማት ፕሮጀክት ፕሮፖዛል ማቅረቢያ ቅጽ

መግቢያ፣

የፕሮጀክቱ መግለጫ

- የፕሮጀክቱ ስም፣
- ፕሮጀክቱ የሚፈጸምበት ቦታ፣
- የፕሮጀክቱ ጊዜ/ወቅት፣
- የፕሮጀክቱ ዓላማ
- የፕሮጀክቱ ጠቅላይነት፣
- የፕሮጀክቱ ተጠቃሚዎች፣

የፕሮጀክቱ ማስፈጸሚያ ሰልጣን፣

የፕሮጀክቱ ተባባሪ አካላት (ስም፣ የስራ ድርሻና / ሃላፊነት)

የክትትልና ቁጥጥር ሰልጣን፣

የፕሮጀክቱ ዘላቂነት ወይንም ጊዜ፣

የድርጊት መርህ ግብር፣

ተ.ቁ	የስራው ዝርዝር	መለኪያ	መጠን	ዕቅድ በየሩብ ዓመት				ፈጻሚ አካል	ምርመራ
				1ኛ	2ኛ	3ኛ	4ኛ		

የፕሮጀክቱ ወጪዎች በዝርዝር

ተ.ቁ	የስራው ዝርዝር	መለኪያ	ብዛት / መጠን	የገንዘብ መጠን (ብር)	ምርመራ
1.					
2.					
3.					

የፕሮጀክቱ ማከካሄጃ ወጪ ምንጭ (ብር)

- 1.) ከግለሰብ/ክቡድን
 - በዓይነት _____
 - በገንዘብ _____
 - በጉልበት _____
- 2.) ከድጋፍ ሰጪ አካላት
 - በዓይነት _____
 - በገንዘብ _____

ይህን ፎርም በተጨማሪ ለህ.ል.ተ. የንግድ ስራ ፕሮጀክት/Enterprise development project/ መጠቀም ይቻላል፡፡

Annex 5: CIDF appraisal committee minute

የፕሮጀክት ፈንድ ገምግሚ ኮሚቴ ቃለ ጉባኤ

የፕሮጀክቱ ሀሳብ የተገመገመበት ቀን, _____

የፕሮጀክቱ ስም: _____

የፕሮጀክቱ ዓይነት:

- የገቢ ማስገኛ ፕሮጀክት
- የጋራ ልማት ፕሮጀክት
- የብልሃት ማበልጸገያ ፕሮጀክት
- የህ.ል.ተ. የንግድ ስራ ፕሮጀክት

ፕሮጀክቱ የሚፈጸምበት ቦታ (ቀበሌ/መደር)፣ _____

ለፕሮጀክቱ ማስፈጸሚያ የተበየቀው በጀት፣ _____

የፕሮጀክቱ ጠቅላይ፣ _____

የፕሮጀክቱ ተጠቃሚዎች ወንድ _____ ሴት _____ ደምር _____

የፕሮጀክቱ ቀጣይነትን አዋጪት አመለካከት ጉዳዮች፣ _____

የኮሚቴው አስተያየት፣ _____

የኮሚቴው የወሳኔ ሀሳብ፣ _____

የኮሚቴው አባላት ስምና ፊርማ

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

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