



Rural
Advisory
Service



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Using ICTs in RAS: Challenges and ways forward

Effectiveness of mobile phone for rural advisory service in west Cameroon

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Introduction (1/2)

missions of agricultural extension and advisory service and ICT tools

One of the missions of extension and rural advisory is to provide producers' with information and other services necessary for their production activities.

The rural sector in Sub- Saharan Africa suffers from several constraints that limit producers' access to support and advisory services.

The bad roads to access rural area reduce the frequency descents of extension agents .

ICTs are tools that can allow extension workers to fulfill their supervisory duties.

Introduction (2/2)

Using of Mobile phone for extension and RAS

CAMYIRD was created in 2011 with the aim of promoting the use of ICTs for development of the agricultural sector.

The organization has experienced mobile phone as extension tools to support rural farmers in West Cameroon .

According to the CTA (2006) , mobile phones have become an indispensable tool for transmitting farmers with knowledge & information .

Cameroon's agricultural sector hardly has the potential of the mobile phone.

Methodology (1/3)

Characterization of farming family of study area

Fondonéra is located 32 km from an urban center , electrified about 70% GSM signal is good enough to allows a telephone conversation (interference by location)

Total population \approx 18,000 inhabitants. with an average of 42 years for men and 36 years for women

Agriculture is the main activity handle by famer organized in small groups (cooperative, CIG). About 80% of farmer identified have at least one mobile.

Methodology (2/3)

Sampling

- 20% of farmer group (10) framed by area extension agents
- 7 farmer group (70 in total)
- Poll test with 10 farmer organization leaders (Semi-direct)
- Data analysis: SPSS 18.0 and Excel (Frequency , Average , Standard Deviation)

Methodology (3/3)

Process

- ✓ Census constitution phonebook + Information + sensitization of producers
- ✓ Configuration of the group function in the " Contact" directory of the extension agent
- ✓ Sending SMS via the group (multi- destination) made
- ✓ Transmission of information (calls) via the most dynamic leaders and peasants
- ✓ Technical and financial support : CAMYIRD via call credit + preferential rate of telephone operators

Results (1/3)

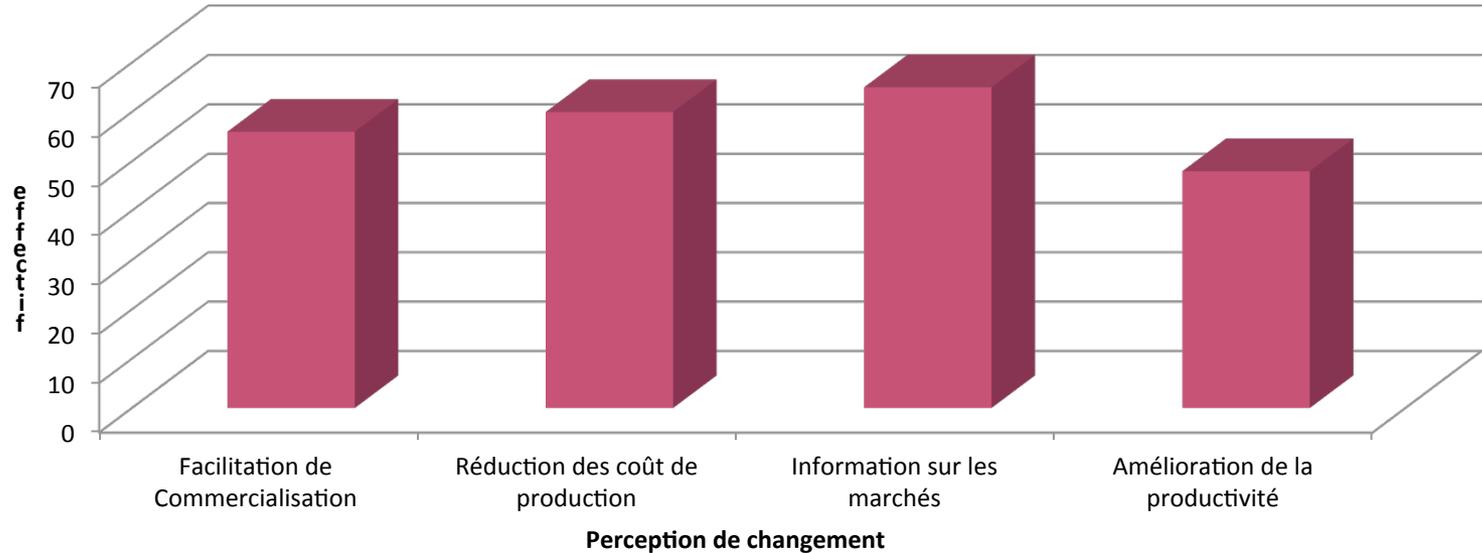
The revitalization of neglected producers

- Isolation of roads → absence of the AVZ → → poor performance, discouraged ... + abandonment .
- Mobile phone restoring contact between producers and extension agent
- 80% says regain confidence to extension agent and this hope of improving their condition.
- Exchange (90% women) Inter- connexion between producers (neighboring villages)

Results (2/3)

The perception of the effects by producers

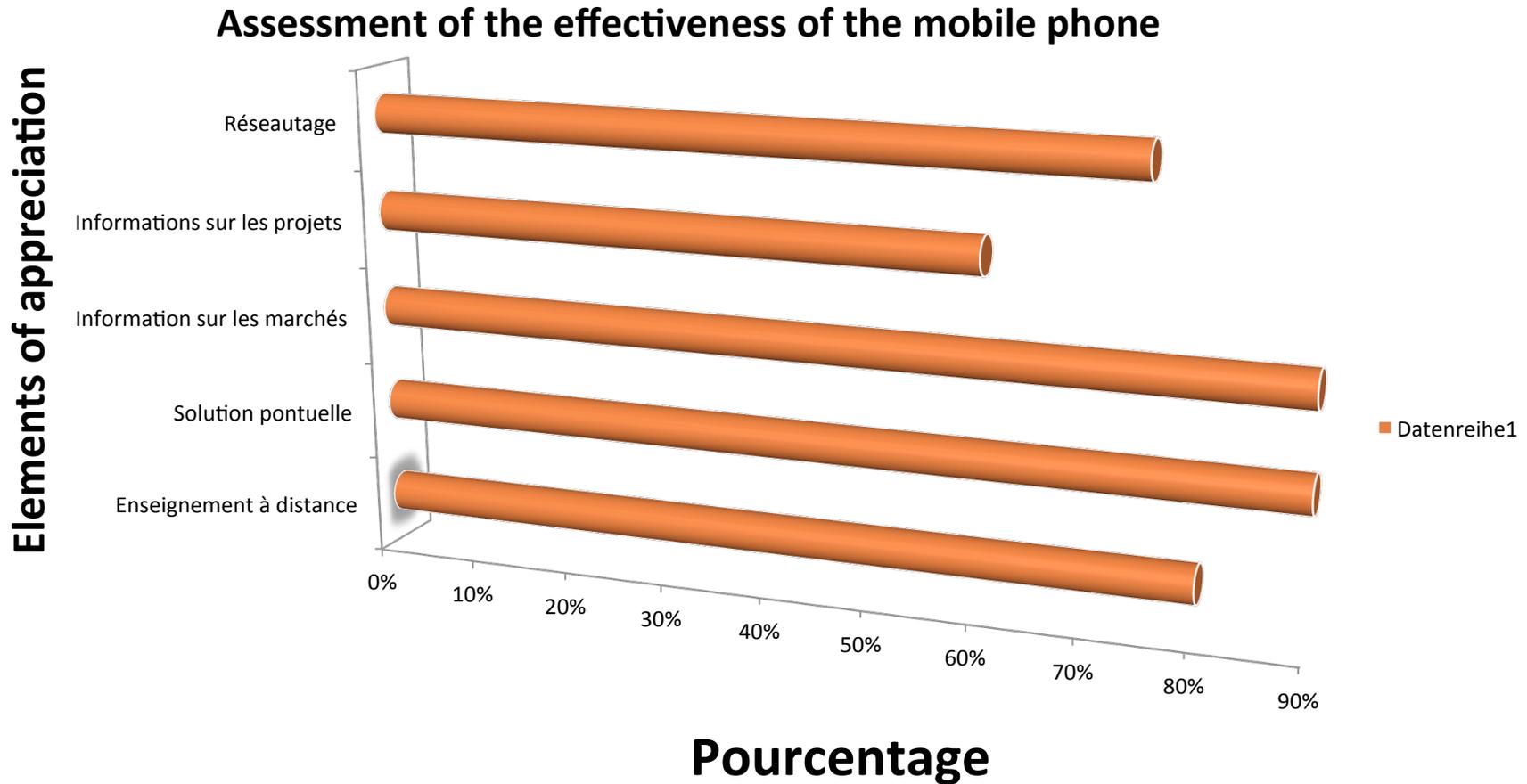
Effect of mobile phones on the technical and economic performance of the operating



72% of women use the phone for the marketing of cassava by-products (Gari , flour, etc ...)

Results (3/3)

Assessment of the effectiveness of the service



Discussion (1/1)

Sustainability of ICT for agriculture

Strength: awareness of actors, Farmer's dynamism , involvement of women and youth, boom of mobile phone applications (500 million in Africa)

Weakness: education , poverty , poor infrastructure , government involvement still reserved

Opportunities : Growth Recovery in Africa (CAADP) and National Agriculture Investment Plan (Cameroon)

Constraints: climate change, natural disasters = destruction of infrastructure, worsening of functional illiteracy of ICTs and poverty

Conclusion

An Efficient service , but

Mobilephone can greatly contribute to the supervision of farmers ;
as an effective communication channel

Over 80 % of farmer have made a positive assessment for its use
for coaching

Fondonéra populations (72 % women) are showing enthusiasm
for the use of mobile phone as communication tools to improve
their living conditions .

but

The absence of demonstrating + weak GSM signal & rural poor
education + = reduction of its use

Recommendations

Effective involvement of agriculture and rural development actors

- ❖ The dynamism of farmers and their demonstrated willingness to use the mobile phone as a tool and not as a luxury item,
- ❖ the State of Cameroon supported by telephone operators in both the public and private sector must get involved and make available adequate ICT infrastructure to facilitate the daily use of mobile phones by farmers and extension workers .

Merci !
Thank you !

“ICT can be a backbone of agricultural extension in remote rural areas”