



A mixed qualitative–quantitative–participatory methodology: a study of the agricultural knowledge and information system (AKIS) of small-scale farmers in Kirinyaga district, Kenya

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Agriculture and rural development form the bedrock for effective development in Kenya, where about 80% of the farmers are smallholders. Small-scale farmers face many challenges in harnessing knowledge and information from appropriate sources. To help address the problems, and facilitate participation, sharing and exchange of knowledge and information, there is a need to understand the agricultural knowledge and information systems of small-scale farmers. This paper examines how key agricultural actors in Kirinyaga district, Kenya support sharing and exchange of agricultural knowledge and information. The paper is based on a study that adopts a triangulation of qualitative, quantitative and participatory methodologies and methods for sampling, data collection and data analysis. The methods combine Relaxed Appraisal of Agricultural Knowledge Systems and Participatory Rural Appraisal; questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions; case studies; observation and analysis of secondary data. Preliminary results suggest that richer and deeper data is collected through mixed methodologies and methods. The study points to the need to strengthen and formalise linkages between farmers, researchers, extensionists, educators, farmers' groups, private sector, input stockists, microfinance institutions, media and civil society organisations.

Keywords: Agricultural knowledge and information system (AKIS); information behavior; qualitative-quantitative-participatory methodology; Kenya