

On-line survey of users of Access Agriculture:

Summary

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AccessAgriculture

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Executive summary

Registered users of Access Agriculture are the most loyal respondents. Of 7675 people who registered for Access Agriculture by 1 August 2018, 1443 (19%) took the survey. The authors contacted several thousand other people through networks and by email, so a total of 2277 respondents took the survey. The high rate of response to this survey suggests that Access Agriculture's users value the platform.

Over 80% of the respondents started using Access Agriculture after our last general survey in 2015. Most of them work in Africa, are male (85%) and over half are under 40 years old. The respondents were researchers (39%), extensionists (35%), educators (28%), and farmers (27%), in that order; the percentages add up to more than 100% because many people selected several occupations. While broadcasters make up a slim percentage of the users, there are actually quite a few of them: 44 who showed the videos on TV and 55 who played them on the radio. This suggests that there is great potential for Access Agriculture to engage more with broadcasters who value quality content.

Respondents reached an estimated 21 million people with the videos. This includes six broadcasters who reached an estimated 20 million people. This is an under-estimate, as the rest of those who broadcast videos on TV and radio no doubt reached many millions more, but they did not provide us with audience numbers.

The respondents used the videos by watching them, showing them to farmers, to students and to extensionists and by sharing the links. Most downloaded the standard videos for TV or PC, although a respectable 29% downloaded the cell phone versions (3gp)—including those who downloaded both the standard versions and the cell phone versions. Fact sheets were popular, and 31% of viewers downloaded them. We were pleasantly surprised to see that 29% of respondents had downloaded publications related to the distribution, use and impact of farmer training videos.

Two thirds of the users watched more than five videos, including 6% (102 people) who said they had viewed 50 videos or more. Few people watch the videos alone; they almost always share them, and do so frequently, showing the videos in farming communities and watching the videos as a way of learning new ideas to share with others. Some have used the videos to reach hundreds or thousands of people.

Almost 900 people have shared the videos with other organisations. By conservative estimate, some 3000 organisations use Access Agriculture videos.

The respondents generally like the quality and content of the videos. Some did say that the videos could be easier to find and download. Almost half of the respondents (45%) have not noticed that Access Agriculture hosts videos in other languages besides French and English. However, some do watch videos in Swahili, Fon, Spanish, Hausa, Chichewa, Luo, Bambara, Bariba and other languages.

1 Background

In 2015, the authors conducted an on-line survey of users of Access Agriculture (Bentley et al. 2015). That study found that Access Agriculture users came from research, extension, NGOs and farmers' associations. Nearly one in four shared the videos with colleagues in other organisations. They reached about 750,000 by screening the videos for small groups, in communities and in classrooms. An estimated 42 million people watched the videos on TV or listened to the audio track on the radio. Even by 2015, people were starting to watch Access Agriculture videos on tablets and cell

phones. Users wanted translation into Hindi, Spanish, Arabic, Swahili, Bengali, Luganda, Portuguese and many other languages, including many local ones. Users wanted more topics, more promotion of Access Agriculture, and they said the videos should be easier to download. Then there were only 2533 registered users of Access Agriculture in 2015 (at the time of our last on-line survey). Now there are almost 8000. Clearly it was time to do a survey to see how they were accessing and using the videos.

2 Results

2.1 Respondents to the on-line survey

12,208 email addresses were entered (including those of 7884 people who are registered users of Access Agriculture. Many other people were invited through list-serves and by an announcement on the Access Agriculture platform. Of 2277 respondents (as of 28 Dec 2018), 1547 listed a country. They came from 115 countries, mainly from Africa (78%), Asia-Pacific (10%), and the Americas (7%). Three of the top 18 countries figure were outside of Africa (India, Bangladesh and Bolivia).

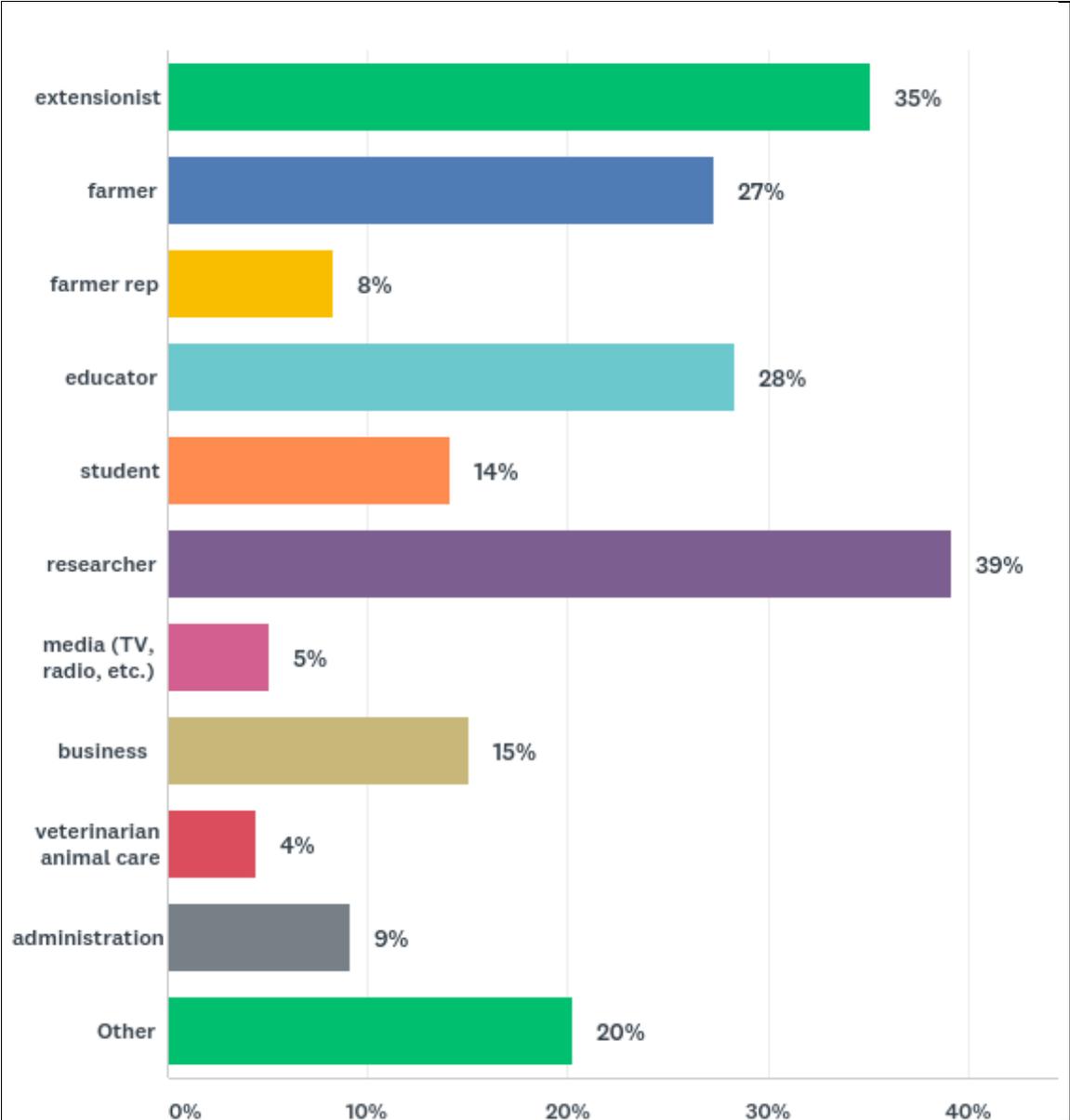


Figure 1. Occupations

Most people claimed multiple occupations, so the numbers add up to over 200%. Our respondents were researchers, extensionists, educators, and farmers in that order. The next largest group was “other” (people really do resist being put into a pigeon hole). Occupations were similar to those of the 2015 respondents. However, by 2018 there was a growing interest from the private sector, and students, those ICT-savvy young people who will be using web platforms and digital videos long into the future.

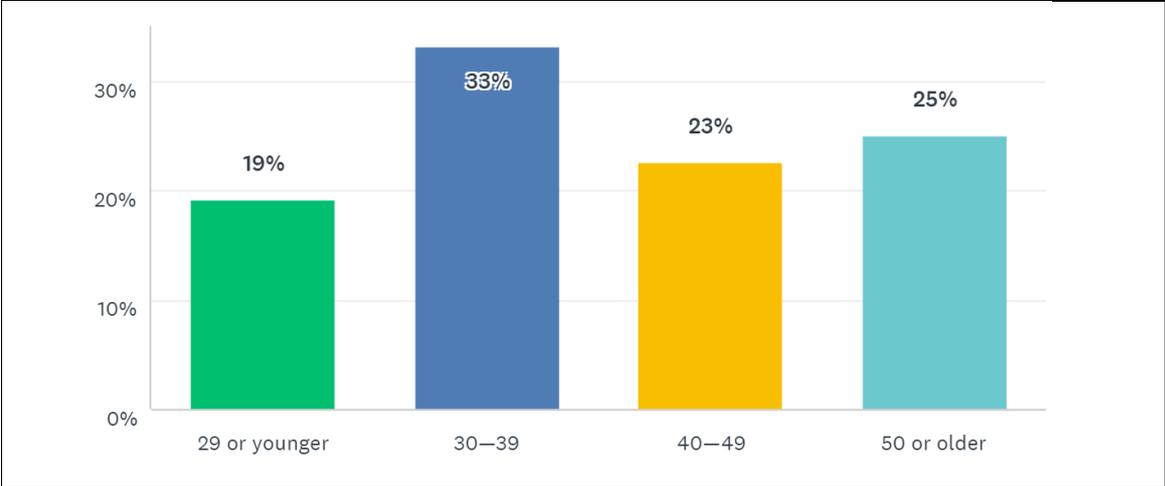


Figure 2. Age

Over half of the users are under 40. Access Agriculture appeals to a younger audience. Only 221 women (15%) completed the survey and 1299 men (85%). The survey asked when people first started to use Access Agriculture; 80% started after 2015. The platform continues to attract a growing number of new users each year.

2.2 Where users find videos

Most get their videos from Access Agriculture, although other sources are also popular. 12% (187) had used Access Agriculture DVDs. The 13% (217 people) who wrote in “other” got videos from the Internet (other sites, affiliated or not with Access Agriculture), or they made them themselves.

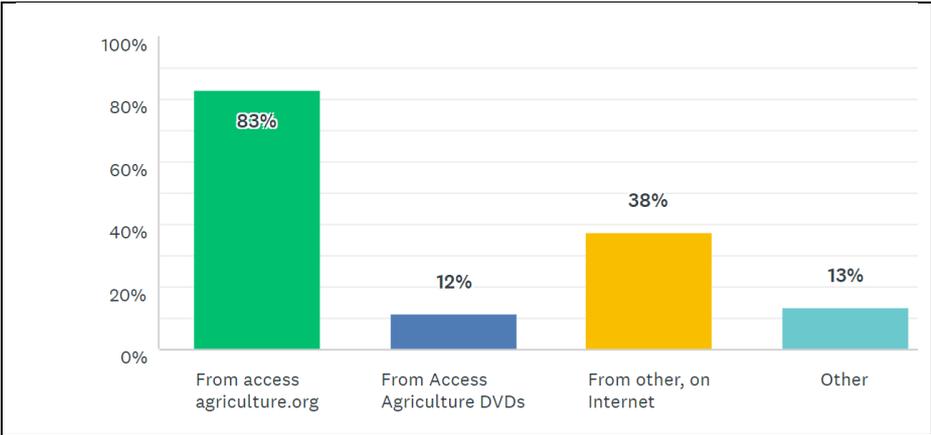


Figure 3. Source of videos

Some got videos from other agencies, e.g. the library, COLEACP, the Ministry of Agriculture, the extension services, ICRISAT, Mercy Corps, IRRI, McKnight’s CCRP programme, PAEPARD, DEDRAS, Egerton University, or MSSRF in Chennai, India. One mentioned the Shamba Shape Up programme

from Kenya. Some saw Access Agriculture videos first on RUFORUM. Others reiterated that they get videos from Access Agriculture or from a person linked to Access Agriculture.

2.3 The products that users access

Videos are the first choice of files to download (by 84% of users), but 29% also download mobile versions for cell phones, only introduced in 2017. Nearly a third (31%) of users download fact sheets or Access Agricultural publications (29%).

2.4 Using the videos

Respondents use the videos by watching them, showing them to farmers, to students, and to extensionists, and by sharing the links (in that order). In the 2015 survey, only 38% said they were sharing the videos with farmers which increased to 55% by 2018.

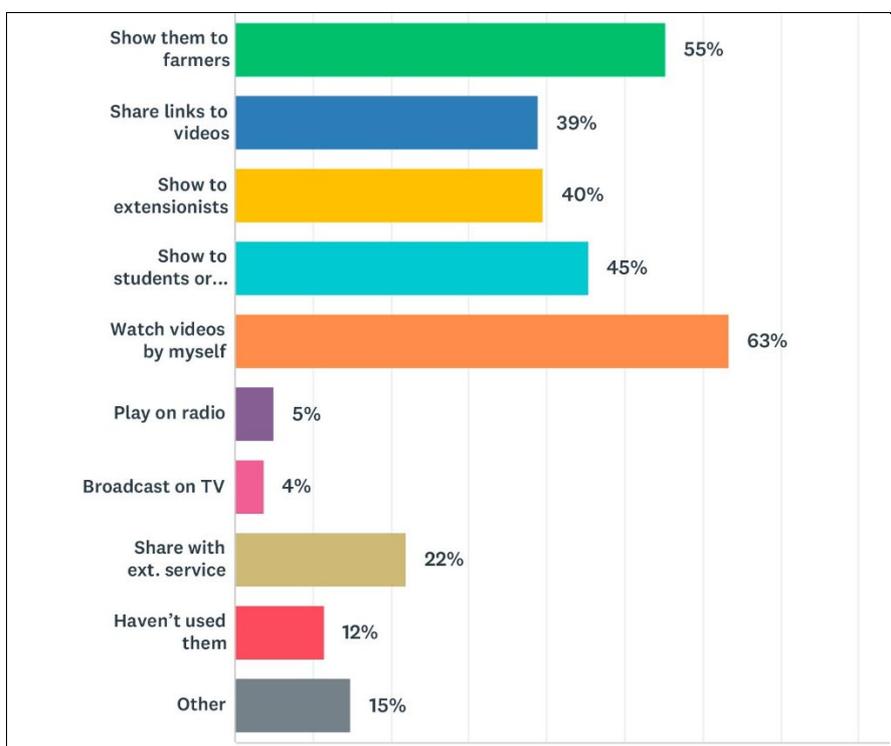


Figure 4. Using the videos

Many users left comments in “other” to say that they were sharing the videos on WhatsApp, on the Internet, via websites, Facebook, with youth, with other farmers, with students, at conferences, with extensionists, on radio and on TV, among others.

2.5 Watching the videos

Almost all had watched at least some videos. Nearly 70% watched six or more videos, including 97 people (6%) who watched over 50 videos.

2.6 How many videos users share with others

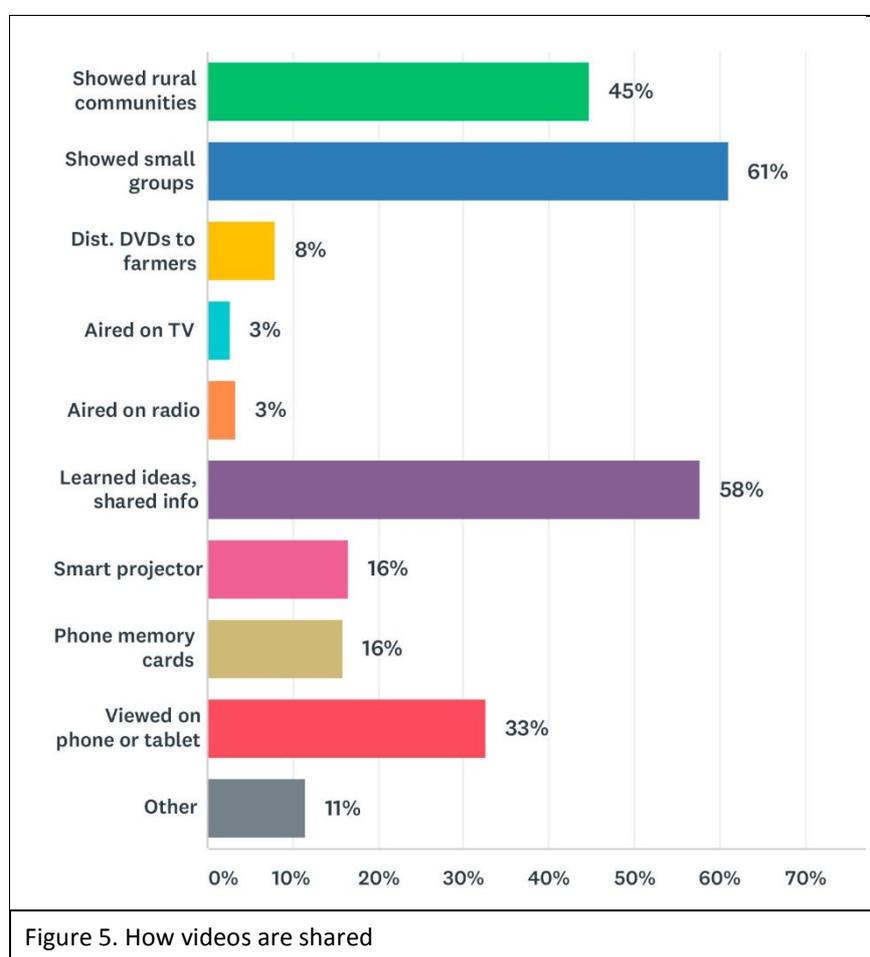
Eighty-eight percent of the respondents said they share videos. Sixty-eight people (4%) shared over 50 videos.

2.7 How often videos are shared

The modal response is 2 to 5 times a year, but hundreds of respondent's train others over 6 or 12 times a year, suggesting a steady use of the videos. Nearly 90% do train other people with the videos.

2.8 How videos are shared

Many of the respondents showed the videos in communities (45%) and to small groups (61%). This is definitely higher than in 2015, indicating that people are getting more experienced and interested in taking videos to rural communities. 16% distributed videos for mobile phones on memory cards, suggesting that this innovation (introduced only in 2017) is being well received. 34% showed the videos on laptops and 16% showed videos using the smart projector. 57% used the videos to learn ideas and share them with their audience, suggesting that the videos are fuel for creative thinking. While broadcasters make up a slim percentage of the users, there are actually quite a few of them: 44 who showed the videos on TV and 55 who played them on the radio.



2.9 Number of people reached

About 400,000 people were trained using videos by respondents who said they use Access Agriculture videos (Table 1). An estimated 900,000 more were reached by respondents who reached over 10,000 people, not counting those who used mass media. So, an estimated 1,300,000 people watched videos during screenings. Perhaps 20 million more saw videos or heard the soundtracks on radio or TV, so the respondents who took this survey reached about 21 million people.

Table 1. Number of people reached by videos			
Number of people trained using videos or soundtracks	Median value	Number of responses	Approximate number of people trained
None	0	194	0
Fewer than 10	5	266	1,330
10 to 19	15	178	2,670
20 to 49	35	182	6,370
50 to 99	75	196	14,700
100 to 499	300	208	62,400
500 to 999	750	71	53,250
1000 to 4,999	3,000	47	141,000
5,000 to 9,999	7,500	14	105,000
Subtotal			386,720
10,000 + ^a		24	903,800
Subtotal (people who saw videos during screenings)			1,290,520
10,000 + ^b		6	20,100,000
total		1356	21,390,520

- a) During email follow-up, these respondents estimated the number of people who saw the videos during screenings.
b) These six respondents responded to email follow-up and estimated numbers of radio and TV viewers

2.10 Sharing videos with organisations

Of the 1546 people who answered this question, 59% shared the videos institutionally.

A remarkable 901 people shared the videos with other organisations, including 179 who reached out to six agencies or more.

Some 704 people took the trouble to write in one to seven or more names of specific organizations. One person typed in the names of 15 organizations. These 704 respondents mentioned 1751 organizations (an average of 2.5 each), with little overlap. ADRA was mentioned 4 times, CRS 5 times (in different countries), CIP 3 times (also in different countries), Concern Worldwide 8 times and FAO 7 times, among others, but nearly all of the organizations were unique.

The respondents shared Access Agriculture with farmers' associations and clubs, government agencies, international donors, international research, agro dealers, processors, universities and other schools, communities, friends-&-neighbours, CBOs, faith-based organizations, national and local NGOs, businesses, media outlets, youth and student groups, on social media and every conceivable type of organization, even a prison.

2.11 Why people like the videos

Users like the quality (68%) and content (87%) of the videos.

2.12 Using different language versions of the videos

Forty-five percent said they were unaware that the videos were in other languages besides English and French, suggesting that more needs to be done to let users know about the local language versions.

The most popular languages among users are English, and French, which is not surprising since all the videos are in English and most are in French. Swahili (or Kiswahili) and Fon make a strong showing. Spanish is appearing as a top choice, even though only 25 videos (now 31) are in that language.

2.13 Financial sustainability

In response to a question about finding financial support for translation, 797 people wrote in a response, including many who made concrete suggestions. Many of the respondents said they did not know. Others gave vague suggestions ("find a donor and write a project"), but many made thoughtful suggestions. 49 wanted to charge users a fee to download videos or use the platform.

78 suggested seeking funding from national governments, for the language(s) spoken in each country. Ten people suggested crowdfunding, e.g. through Kiva, hackathons, and Global Crowdrise.

Some respondents had suggestions for translations they wanted in specific languages, including Amharic, Arabic, Aymara, Malgache, Oromifa, Quechua, Sinhala, and Tamil. Many suggested specific agencies to reach out to, for funding, and this information is included in the full report. Several people also volunteered to help translate (listed in the full report).

2.14 Ideas for improvement

Do you have any suggestions for improving the Access Agriculture platform or the videos it hosts?

Almost 1000 people (996) took the trouble to leave written comments for this question, another indication that Access Agriculture matters to many people. Hundreds left comments just to say how much they valued Access Agriculture. Some even said that the platform was "perfect" or that Access Agriculture should just "keep up the good work". Some wrote that they hadn't seen the videos yet. But there were four main themes to the constructive criticism: 1) the videos should have smaller file sizes so they are easier to download, 2) the platform should be promoted more widely, 3) there should be more topics and 4) the videos should be translated more widely.

Some users suggested making it easier to register, login or retrieve a forgotten password. Others want the platform to be easier to search.

3 Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions

Of the 2277 people who took this survey, 70% finished it and over half left comments. Thousands of people are using the platform, including researchers, extensionists, educators, and farmers. The users like Access Agriculture so much that they shared it with over 1700 organisations.

Students in high schools and universities will be the farmers and extension people of tomorrow, and their exposure to Access Agriculture in school is a good omen for future use of the platform. Other youth are also being reached, including young extension people and entrepreneurial farmers. Users

are finding the cell phone versions of the videos and starting to share videos with farmers on mobile phone memory cards. Some 99 radio and TV stations have played the videos on the air.

Many users fail to see the language options, but over half of the users do use and appreciate the language options. There is great demand for further translations (and topics, and more videos in general).

The videos are hard for some people to download, who want smaller file sizes and easier downloads. Many are downloading videos from smart phones, paying for Internet time, and the users are keen to save money. Some people are discouraged by the registration process. Some said the platform could be easier to search. Users also want Access Agriculture to be more widely promoted. They also want more translations.

Recommendations

Do more to promote Access Agriculture. Make a greater effort to reach women. Continue adding videos on other topics, and in more languages. Do more to make users aware that there are many videos in other languages.

Do more to let users know about downloading 3gp videos, which are of smaller file sizes. Make it easier to register for the platform. Enrich video platform with other content, as people visiting the platform are also interested in fact sheets and publications.

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