



CRS Farmer-to-Farmer Program Small Farms Conference

Summary Report

May 2022, Adama, Ethiopia



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ABBREVIATIONS

CRS	Catholic Relief Services
F2F	Farmer-To-Farmer
EGCDWO	Ethiopian Guenet Church Development and Welfare Organization
MoA	Ministry Of Agriculture
EPHI	Ethiopian Public Health Institute
CIMMYT	International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre
MoH	Ministry of Health
EMI	Ethiopian Management Institute
US	United States
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region
MCS	Meki Catholic Secretariat

CRS FARMER-TO-FARMER PROGRAM SMALL FARMS CONFERENCE SUMMARY REPORT

1. LOCATION AND DATE

The Conference was held at Haile Resort (Adama, Ethiopia) on Thursday May 19, 2022.

2. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Successful organization of the conference was due to committed supports from the CRS Senior Management, especially Mr. Zemedew Zewdie (Country Representative) and Suganya Kimbrough (Head of Programs), planning committee including Melikte Tadesse, Wintana Mebratie, Mulugeta Tadesse, Luwam Yohannes, Lidia Retta and Haile Deressa from CRS, and Abraham Kasaye from EGCDWO (NGO partner). The conference was also made possible with the initial ideas, continuous guidance and supports from Mr. Patrick Bell (F2F Chief of Party at the CRS Headquarters), Mrs. Nyambura Theuri (F2F Deputy Director) and Mr. Peter Kariuki (F2F Technical Advisor). Dr. Moti Jaleta (CIMMYT), Dr. Mitiku Bekele (Jimma University), Yigerem Terefe (EMI), Tiruset Haile (CRS), Dr. Masresha Tessema (EPHI) and Fesseha Tekle (MoH) are highly acknowledged for their valued presentations in the plenary session and panel discussion. In addition, host partners and stakeholders who presented their achievements and products, and shared their experiences at the marketplace are highly acknowledged. We are also grateful to Mrs. Tsigereda Tafesse (Moderator Consultant) for the great facilitation which made the conference events very interactive and effective.

3. BACKGROUND

The USAID Farmer-to-Farmer Program provides technical assistance to farmers, farm groups, agribusinesses and other agriculture sector institutions worldwide to promote sustainable improvements in food security and agricultural processing, production, and marketing. The main goal of the program is to generate sustainable, broad-based economic growth in the agricultural sector through voluntary technical assistance. The program also promotes people-to-people exchange, understanding of US foreign assistance programs and private involvement in development activities.

The Catholic Relief Service (CRS) is implementing second phase of the F2F program (2018-2023) in Ethiopia, Benin, East Timor, Nepal, Rwanda and Uganda Ethiopia. In Ethiopia, the programme focuses on technical interventions in crop and livestock value chains. Based on key challenges and needs identified during problem analysis with host partners, skilled experts are recruited to provide technical supports for a period of two - four weeks to the host organizations and beneficiaries. After receiving the technical assistance, the host partners adopt the solutions and recommendations i.e., technologies, techniques and best practices provided by the volunteers, and disseminate to the wider beneficiaries. Previously, volunteer experts were recruited from the United States (US) and were deployed to the partner countries. However, following the Covid-19 pandemic that restricted travel, the program focused on engaging local volunteer experts who are remotely paired with the US volunteers to implement the assignments.

On May 19, 2022, CRS organized a 'Small Farms Conference' to facilitate exchange and adoption of best practices, technologies, and innovations among host partners, beneficiaries and stakeholders participating in the F2F program. The conference was attended by farmer cooperative unions, private

agri-businesses, microfinance institutions, civil society organizations, universities as well as representatives of the ministry of agriculture, CRS and USAID programs.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE SMALL FARMS CONFERENCE

The Small Farms Conference has two main objectives. These are:

1. Facilitating exchange and adoption of best practices, technologies and innovations among host partners and beneficiaries.
2. Facilitating linkages and collaborations among host partners and other stakeholders.

5. CONFERENCE EVENTS (CONTENTS)

5.1. WELCOMING REMARKS

By Zemedu Zewdie, CRS Country Representative

The conference started by the overview and welcoming of Mr. Zemedu Zewdie, Country Representative of CRS. Mr. Zemedu stated CRS is an organization that has been doing emergency supports in responding to natural and man-made disasters, mitigation and recovery, agricultural and livelihood development, protection and safeguarding activities in Ethiopia for over 62 years. Founded more than 75 years ago during the World War II CRS works in more than 50 countries with primary focus on relief services and development assistance to vulnerable communities. Mr. Zemedu explained that CRS Ethiopia implements most of its development interventions through its partner organisations. Currently, CRS has about 18 local partners who are also funded by other donors. Consistent to this modality of operation CRS primarily works to strengthen the capacity of its partner organizations who are direct implementers of CRS supported initiatives and activities. Mr. Zemedu highlighted some of the achievements of CRS in the past seven years that include digging of 1,500 water wells that gave access to clean and sustainable water source to more than 4 million people in Somalia, Oromia, SNNPR, and Tigray regions. The irrigation work implemented in collaboration with Haramaya University and improvement of streams in Kersa area are some of the success stories cited by Mr. Zemedu. Through its diverse initiatives and engagement CRS helped more than 10.8 million people in the last year alone.

Mr. Zemedu explained that CRS collaborates with various international donors such as USAID in over 120 countries, with Ethiopia being the largest portfolio of CRS globally. The Farmer-to-Farmer program is one of the USID funded programmes implemented in Ethiopia and other countries. F2F brings together expertise from US farmers, research institutions, universities and private sectors with the goal of increasing farmer productivity and quality of life in the host countries by introducing new techniques, providing learning opportunities and transferring skills. The F2F programme mobilised US agricultural professionals from various fields to share knowledge, technologies, and information to farmers and farmer-based businesses and universities in Ethiopia. As a result of the volunteer technical assistances, hosts have gained new skills, improved their performance and benefited local farmers and other clients. Due to the covid-19 pandemic, CRS F2F modified its approach and started engaging local professional volunteers who are remotely working with the US volunteers in implementing the technical assistance. This contributes to raising local awareness on volunteerism.

Mr. Zemedu thanked the USAID's Feed the Future Program for its ongoing assistance. He also appreciated the partnership of Federal and Regional governments, Zone and Wereda administrations, Universities, researchers, administrators, and hosting organizations that are instrumental partners of the F2F programme.



“...In 2021 alone CRS Ethiopia helped more than 10.8 million people through its diverse initiatives and engagement”

*Zemedu Zewdie
CRS Country Representative,
Ethiopia*

5.2. OPENING STATEMENT

By Wondwosen Dejene, Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)

Mr. Wondwosen Dejene, a senior advisor of the Ministry of MoA, delivered the opening statement of the conference on behalf of H.E. Dr. Fikru Regassa, State Minister of the MoA. In his speech, Mr. Wondwosen emphasized the importance of such conferences in facilitating transfer of information, knowledge and skills while disseminating new technologies to farmers. Mr. Wondwosen praised the F2F program and participants' efforts in their roles in bridging the skill gaps in the sector and emphasized the importance of such a beneficiary-focused and skill transferring projects in making the work done sustainable.

According to Mr. Wondwosen, the MoA recently established a new program office called Demonstration Desk, which is tasked with showcasing and disseminating dipositive research findings directly to beneficiaries. Hence, it is worthwhile to share experiences from the CRS F2F program.

“Such Small Farms Conference is essential to facilitate transfer of information, knowledge and skills among stakeholders, and to disseminate new technologies to framers”

Wondwosen Dejene, MoA



5.3. HIGHLIGHTS ON FARMER-TO-FARMER PROGRAM

By Haile Deressa, CRS F2F Program Manager

Mr. Haile Deressa, CRS F2F Program Manager, provided an overview of the Farmer-to-Farmer program. Mr. Haile explained in his speech that the program two major projects which are Crop and Livestock Value Chains. He described and discussed the two main goals of the F2F programme. The first goal is to ensure inclusive and sustainable agricultural development work, thereby creating job opportunities, especially for young people. The second goal of the programme is promoting people-to-people exchange to increase volunteers' and host partners' relations and their understanding of US international development programs.



“F2F programme established a system of facilitating interactions, networking and learning among volunteers, host institutions and beneficiaries.”

Haile Deressa, CRS F2F

Mr. Haile stated that F2F technical assistance primarily focuses on four types of strategic partners. First, F2F works with a farmer organizations with large number of beneficiaries and impact potential. The second group of partners is private sector businesses involved in farming and agro-processing such as dairy farms. The third group is education and research institutions providing technologies and technical advice to the communities and agribusinesses. The fourth group of partners is non-governmental organizations, especially those who providing financial services and development supports to the communities.

Mr. Haile stated that the program approach involves problem analysis to identify technical challenges and host partner needs, Scope of Work development, and volunteer recruitment and engagement. In this manner, US and local professional volunteers with key expertise are deployed to practically provide the technical assistance. Mr. Haile stated that the F2F programme established a system of facilitating interactions, networking and learning among volunteers, host institutions and beneficiaries.

Mr. Haile also discussed the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the program outcomes. Since 2019, 46 of the planned 80 volunteers were mobilised and assigned to support the host institutions. Nearly 2000 people have received direct assistance, and 24 host partners are being supported. Haile emphasised that Gender inequality is still an issue, with 39 percent of trained participants of F2F being women despite the target of 48 percent. Haile reported that the F2F program impact in terms of gross revenue of the hosts involved in business is increased nearly by 400%, achieving \$ 38.5 million against a baseline of \$ 10.4 million. These results are attributed to a nearly 60% increase in net income and a nearly \$ 2 million expansion of the agricultural loan values for rural communities. Development of

new/improved products and services by hosts, following volunteer assistances, highly contributed to these results.

Mr. Haile stated that the program collaborates with other sectors/programs (WASH program and health office) to address the issue of nutritional deficiency through nutrition awareness, nutritious food preparation and recipe demonstration. The program also assists third generation universities in strengthening their capacities to produce better research results that benefit local farmers. In addition, provides supports to fill gaps in academic leadership and management to enhance overall performance of the universities.

Mr. Haile identified the program's major challenges as the ongoing burden of Covid-19 and the security problem in northern part of the country. Lack of appropriate skill and experience to solve some unique technological problems faced by partner organizations, as well as the lack of laboratories available for simulation, system analysis, or related work are also mentioned as being challenges.

Mr. Haile thanked last year's winner of the USAID Farmer-to-Farmer Volunteer of the Year Award recipient from CRS, Dr Melkamu Alemayehu, who was in attendance at the conference. Dr. Melkamu initiated projects to grow vegetables in the health centre compounds in collaboration with the F2F partner Bahir Dar Catholic Secretariat, CRS WASH program and health office. He supported a health centre and local farmers to establish vegetable gardens with extra time and other resource commitments.

A question was raised from a participant from Debre Markos University regarding availability of funding opportunities in the program which can be used to support technological innovations of small agricultural machineries which can be used by the farmers. Mr. Zemedu, CRS country representative, responded that although there is no grant fund in the Farmer-to-Farmer program, host partners can explore USAID and CRS funding opportunities to access grants for viable project ideas.

5.4. VALUE CHAIN MANAGEMENT FOR AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES

By Dr. Moti Jaleta, International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre (CIMMYT)

Dr. Moti Jaleta who is a Senior Scientist, Agricultural Economist, at CIMMYT made a presentation on value chain management for agricultural commodities. Dr. Moti stated that because products are produced by a large number of farmers, standardizing their quality is extremely difficult. As output is determined by environment, genetic and management variabilities, often there are no standards for agricultural products. He explained that the agricultural value chain suffers because of middlemen who simply increase price margins without adding any value leading to increased and volatile market prices. The absence of an insurance scheme in the industry is another factor constraining the agricultural value chain identified by Dr. Moti. He said that we need to consider the value chain in its entirety as the strength of a value chain is limited to its weakest link in the chain. Moreover, there is no established value chain to accommodate agricultural production.

Dr. Moti said the primary focus should be on investing in human capital as human resource management is critical at every stage of the value chain. People must be trained, educated, and empowered. To retain trained people in your organizations across all aspects of the value chain, we must reward achievement.

“We must consider agricultural value chain in its entirety as a value chain is only as strong as its weakest link”

*Dr. Moti Jaleta,
CIMMYT*



Dr. Moti stressed the importance of properly gathering and interpreting information at all stages of the value chain in order to make timely decisions based on the available information. He also stressed the importance of maintaining product quality in order to gain trust and win competitions. Quality should be rewarded to justify the extra costs incurred to ensure quality. Dr. Moti gave the example of quality control in milk production “when discussing milk quality, we must reach out to farmers and explain what milk quality is. A poor-quality milk from single farmer will contaminate the products collected from all the other farmers. As a result, we should be able to raise milk quality awareness for each farmer. Just as we should reward those who ensure quality, there should also be a penalty for those who do not. We cannot ensure quality or build market trust if this type of mechanism is not present.”

Dr. Moti emphasised the importance of healthy competition to foster creativity and improve efficiency, and explained the Ansoff’s business development matrix in relation to the agricultural value chain in Ethiopia. He stated that competition should be considered both from the market side and the product side. He elaborated on the need for developing a distinct brand and the importance of risk management in the value chain through proactive measures.

Questions were raised from the participants in relation to the effects of using pesticides, herbicides and low-quality seeds in agricultural production as well as potential solutions to address the issues of nutritional deficiency in products. Dr. indicated that although the use of chemicals as insecticide, herbicide, and fungicide is not an ideal solution, the absence of viable alternative forced the farmers to continue the practice. He mentioned a recent study conducted in the country which showed the importance of agronomic biofortification (adding micronutrients like zinc and iron into soils) to enhance essential micronutrients in grains which are needed for human growth and immunity development.

Further questions were asked regarding quality control issues in the value chain particularly product tampering and adulteration which has been happening with increasing frequency in products such as butter and Injera on the market. Participants questioned ‘how can the customer be regarded as the king when the customer is made to consume such adulterated food products?’ Dr. Moti acknowledged the problem and the serious public health hazard it is causing. Dr. Moti said building a strong consumer society is required to ensure consumer protection and for the customer to be treated as a king.

5.5. THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IN ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

By Dr. Mitiku Bekele, Jimma University

Dr. Mitiku Bekele who is a dean for College of Education and Behavioural Sciences at Jimma University mentioned that he became acquainted with CRS through engaging in volunteer works. In his presentation Dr. Mitiku stressed that leadership is everyone's role. If a human resource is not adequately trained, lead and manage an organization, all other resources are a waste. A single person will not be sufficient to enable the organization to achieve its goals, Dr. Mitiku stated. It is critical to a group of people with diverse skills and experiences needed to achieve the larger organizational goals.

Dr. Mitiku explained the importance of decision making in leadership based on the best available information. He said leaders enable organizations achieve their goals by effective and efficient resource mobilization and making informed decisions. He stated that in order to maximize the use of human and other resources, understanding the complex behaviour and nature of humans is needed. Finding qualified employees and striking a balance between effectiveness and efficiency are among the leadership challenges discussed by Dr. Mitiku. Technically competent leaders who understand employee behaviours and have a thorough understanding of their organization are required to overcome the different challenges.



“Leaders enable organizations achieve their goals by effective and efficient resource mobilization and making informed decisions”

Dr. Mitiku Bekele, Jimma

5.6. THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IN BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

By Mr. Yigerem Terefe, Ethiopian Management Institute

Mr. Yigerem, Management Consultant at Ethiopian Management Institute, spoke on the topic of leadership for business development. He explained that businesses continually strive to be the best in a competitive environment. Businesses need to have a competitive advantage over their competitors in order to not only outperform but also to survive. Mr. Yigerem said a business can achieve long-term competitive advantages by improving its operational efficiency. This will enable businesses to better adapt to changes and respond to changes successfully. Strategic thinking is essential in order to transform a business and achieve long-term competitive advantage. For this reason, leaders who are excellent strategists are required.

Mr. Yigerem explained that although measures such as implementing industry best practices, improved machinery, a new management strategy, or implementation of a new business management tool etc. can lead to operational effectiveness. It worth considering that these measures are given to all, and any competitor can adopt them. Hence, developing a strategy for targeting customers,

proposing values, and configuring the value chain are the primary competing points that can ensure competitive advantage difficult to replicate by others. Strategic execution is critical for strategic plans to transform the business. And improving business cultures is required to carry out the strategic plans.

“A business can achieve long-term competitive advantages by improving its operational efficiency”

Yigerem Terefe, EMI



Dr. Mitiku and Mr Yigerem responded to questions raised from the participants regarding non-value adding activities and politics in business and organizations that impacts the agriculture sector. They emphasized the importance of neutrality and inclusiveness. Another participant commented on the importance of interrelations among traditional, modern and hybrid styles of leadership.

5.7. PANEL DISCUSSION

5.7.1. NUTRITION-SENSITIVE AGRICULTURAL INTERVENTIONS TO IMPROVE NUTRITIONAL SECURITY AND HEALTH OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN UNDER 5 IN RURAL ETHIOPIA

Panellists: Dr. Masresha Tessema (Ethiopian Public Health Institute), Mrs. Tiruset Haile (CRS), Mr. Fesseha Tekle (MoH)

One of the highlights of the Farmer-to-Farmer Conference was a Panel Discussion under the theme “Nutrition-sensitive agricultural interventions to improve nutritional security and health of women and young children in rural Ethiopia”. The Panel hosted Dr. Masresha Tessema (Director for Food and Nutrition Research at EPHI), Mrs. Tiruset Haile (Deputy Chief of Party CRS Resilient Food Security Activity Program), and Mr. Fesseha Tekle (Senior Program Manager for Sekota Declaration Delivery Unit, Ministry of Health).

Dr. Masresha spoke on the food-nutrition -health linkages in the context of Ethiopia. He stressed that proper nutrition is essential for good health, and the need of consuming healthy and diverse foods produced by the farmers such as barley, beans, wheat, vegetable, and so on should be promoted. He said nutritional deficiencies are a serious public health concern with over 30 percent of children and nearly 57 percent of adults being affected by growth stunting caused by micronutrient deficiencies. Close to 16 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is lost as a result of this issue every year. Dr. Masresha indicated that growth stunting is a problem occurring across the country. Even though there is adequate food production in some areas the problem still persists due to lack of nutrition knowledge.



Dr. Masresha said Diabetes, heart attacks, and hypertension are also becoming more common urban areas. He stated that a person who experienced growth stunting as a child has a much higher risk of developing these health problems than a person who did not experience stunting. Dr. Masresha articulated the importance of cooperation between the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health and other stakeholders to promote nutrition sensitive agriculture which can help solve these problems.

Mr. Fisseha Tekle on his part explained the concept and practice of nutrition sensitive agriculture. He spoke about the Sekota Declaration which is a government initiative implemented across the country with the goal of eliminating growth stunting by 2030. He said nutrition sensitive agriculture entails focusing on projects that provide supports to the community to produce affordable, nutritious, and sufficient food. The supply of nutritious and diverse food should be sustainable, stable, available, and acceptable to users. Mr. Fisseha also explained economic and social accessibility of nutritious foods in relation to affordability and cultural values of the society. He said producing the required types, quantity and quality, and creating awareness to the public to accept and consume the foods are both important focuses of nutrition sensitive agriculture.

Mr. Fisseha explained the importance of diversifying crop types vis-à-vis the practice of cluster farming, production of nutrient dense crop and animal foods, and fortification of food products as some of the solutions to nutritional problems in the country. He said collaborative efforts and commitments of various organizations and institutions are important to solve issues in the food value chain.

Mr. Fisseha stressed that increasing agricultural production can increase societal earning power, which increases access to balanced nutrition. It can also enable women to provide proper nutrition to their children as women spend most of their earnings on feeding their kids. He mentioned that producing nutrient-dense and bio-fortified foods (adding zinc and iron as fertilizer to the soil), reducing post-harvest losses, and proper transportation of products to the market are important considerations in the value chain.

Mrs. Tiruset Haile from CRS spoke on gender roles and cultural aspects affecting nutritional security of women and children under 5. She explained that the first 1000 days of a child's life, from conception to the age of two, are critical for the child's basic growth and development. It is the window of opportunity to prevent malnutrition in child, and lay foundation for healthy and bright future.

Mrs. Tiruset said women between the ages of 17 and 49 who are of reproductive age, especially first-time mothers, should be prioritized in the nutrition agenda as they are vulnerable due to biological and socioeconomic factors. Even though women are active participants of agricultural activities at various levels, men and women in the household have unequal wealth distribution and consumption particularly in rural communities. Mrs. Tiruset stated that women are unable to provide adequate nutrition for their families due to the imbalance in resource control and utilization. She said by focusing on women, we benefit not only women but the entire family. Mrs. Tiruset also mentioned the negative effect of the highly imbalanced division of labour in households and societal food taboos on the health of pregnant woman and children.

Mrs. Tiruset stressed about the importance of behavioural changes from the food production methods to consumption habits in order to make the entire value chain inclusive of women and people with disabilities. She called for those involved in agricultural research and development to consider the needs of women, children and people with disabilities in their work.

The panellists answered questions raised from participants in relation to the topics discussed. Some of the ideas and suggestions from participants include:

- Nutrition education is a very important instrument for achieving improved nutrition status of families. Thus, a nutrition curriculum should be developed and integrated across the Ethiopian education systems starting from early childhood. Dr. Masresha, panellist explained that the EPHI, MoH and MoA are working with the Ministry of Education to develop nutrition curriculum for elementary school. Hence, the discussion on this forum will be used to strengthen the initiative.
- Sectoral integration is a key approach for achieving our nutrition goals. There needs to be a coherent approach to address nutrition deficiency in its entirety. Shortage or price increase in the agricultural input market, shortage of fertilizer etc are factors contributing to the malnutrition, but often overlooked. The unilateral and often contradicting approaches in the agricultural and other sectors are hampering the achievement of the country's nutrition goals.
- The impact of various nutrition improvement policies and measures should be assessed and evaluated. This enables policy makers and programmes to identify gaps in the current practices and plan mitigation or improvement measures for the future.
- Ethiopia should have a localized nutrition standard to guide nutrition practices and interventions to improve the nutritional status of people.
- Most agricultural research in Ethiopia are focused on Mize, wheat and teff. This has its own negative impact on promoting nutrition sensitive agriculture. Dietary diversity cannot be achieved without the availability of diversified farming beyond maize, wheat and teff, and the know-how on nutrition values different products. Thus, more studies and promotion should be conducted on other nutrition sources.
- Inclusion of women is an important aspect in agricultural sector organizations and projects to improve food and nutrition security. Agricultural and nutrition policies, programmes and interventions should have a gender inclusiveness lens if we want to achieve our nutrition goals.

5.8. FEEDBACKS FROM HOST PARTNERS AND BENEFICIARIES ON F2F VOLUNTEER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

5.8.1. GENET CHURCH DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

By Mr. Abraham Kasaye, Ethiopian Genet Church Development Organization (EGCDWO)

Mr. Abraham from EGCDWO gave a brief overview of the host organization. According to him, the organization is primarily run by volunteers over 800 volunteers and 140 full-time employees. According to Mr. Abraham the partnership between CRS Farmer-to-Farmer and EGCDWO began in 2019 with the promise of technical assistance. He stated that CRS provided them with eye-opening technical assistance by deploying US and local volunteers who practically supported their staff, beneficiaries (farmers and government staff). Furthermore, the volunteers supported the organization in developing a resource mobilization document which is recently published.

Mr. Abraham expressed gratitude for the program's assistance and requested that the volunteer support period to be extended beyond 15 days, based on the nature of the technical support. He also emphasized the significance of establishing a connection between the host and a source of funding, as wider dissemination of some of the volunteer recommendations require funds. He also discussed to the importance of assessing changes and impacts of volunteer works across the hosts and beneficiaries.

5.8.2. MEKI CATHOLIC SECRETARIAT

Mr. Muhedin Teha, Meki Catholic Secretariat (MCS)

Mr. Muhedin from MCS talked about the development wing of Meki Catholic Church. He said the development wing of the Meki Catholic Secretariat has nearly 6 million beneficiaries that are supported through various development and emergency programs. It operates in 23 Weredas providing supports in the areas of food security, education, water, sanitation and hygiene, nutrition and health, child protection, women empowerment, as well as institutional and human capacity building.

Mr. Muhedin said that they have received ten volunteers through F2F program to assist them in value chain management, nutrition, capacity building, water management, and livestock development.

5.8.3. FEEDBACK FROM FARMERS

By Mr. Gebreyohannes Wudima and Mr. Fekadu Belachew

Two farmers reflected on their personal experience of receiving support from F2F programme through host organisations. The first farmers named Gebreyohannes Wudima from Wolkite area expressed gratitude to CRS for all the support the farmers have been getting through the F2F program. He also thanked Wolkite University for hosting the program and facilitating technical supports to farmers in Wolkite on how to do improved farming. He said he is satisfied with the organic fertilizer (biofertilizer) introduced through the F2F support which resulted in improved productivity of his farm. Mr Gebreyohannes stated that the farmers benefited from the biofertilizer, improved seed, and farm equipment. He claims that farmers are now willing to pay for the biofertilizer. He appreciated involvement of farmers in the conference to discuss their issues and experiences with professionals and requested all the participants to consider farmers in future conferences like this one.

The second farmer, Mr. Fekadu Belachew who came from Salale area on his part expressed gratitude to CRS and Salale University for the trainings and advice he received in animal husbandry, forestry, and farming. He stated that he has able to improve quantity and quality of his milk, supply to market

and income. He stated that he will expand his farming using the skills he gained and will also transfer to other farmers to help them improve their production practices and efficiencies.



“the organic fertilizer (biofertilizer) introduced to us by F2F and Wolkite University resulted in improved productivity of my farm”

Gebreyohannes Wudima, a Farmer from Welkite

5.9. MARKETPLACE EXCHANGE AND NETWORKING

The F2F Small Farms Conference hosted 24 marketplace exhibitors, farmer cooperative unions representing thousands of farmers, private sectors, NGOs, research organisations and universities working in the agriculture sector.

The exhibitors showcased and promoted their works, products, and technologies to the conference participants. Some of them have sold their products at the marketplace. The event also created a platform for networking and exchange, and even formation of business cooperation among the organizations. Some of the professional experts participated in the conference also formed linkages with the host organization and expressed interests to provide them technical supports and advice.

The following are photo highlights of the marketplace exchange.

Small Farms Conference Marketplace



5.10. GENERAL FEEDBACKS ON THE SMALL FARMS CONFERENCE



- Participants appreciated the contents, inputs, discussions and networks created at the conference. They recommended the conference to be given more time proportional to its benefits. They affirmed the topics covered and the discussions held are both interesting and useful.
- Farmers benefited from assigning volunteers who are not only intellectuals but also have practical farm experiences.
- A participant from Hawassa University discussed how the university and PhD candidates benefited from the assignment of a volunteer named Dr. Alemu, an instructor who has been teaching in America for over 25 years. Through the volunteer linkage, a staff from Hawassa University also got a PhD opportunity in US.
- Dr. Melkamu Alemayehu, the winner of USAID Farmer-to-Farmer Volunteer Award of the year 2021, thanked CRS for allowing him to fulfil his public service obligation through the volunteer program. CRS approached him for work that connects nutrition and health by establishing vegetable gardens in health centres around Bahir Dar, he said. This work benefited the health centres while also educating their patients on the significance of vegetables in improving human nutrition and health. Dr. Melkamu stated that the 15-day volunteer period expired before the work began, and that he needed to use an additional 15 days and arranged his own transportation to the sites to finish the work. He recommended that the conference should be held over a two or three-day period to allow participants more time to explain what they gained and offered.

5.11. THE WAY FORWARD

By Mr. Peter Kariuki, Technical Adviser for Farmer-to-Farmer Program

Mr. Kariuki stated that the program has been implemented in 116 countries worldwide for the last 37 years. He stated that the program will continue beyond 2023 and that he hopes CRS will continue to be one of the program's implementers.

Mr. Kariuki said moving forward, CRS will continue to be innovative and dynamic learner to improve its activities and services to partners and beneficiaries. He emphasized the importance of

collaboration and linkage with the government, particularly the Ministry of Agriculture. Mr. Kariuki believes that it will be more interesting to go out and organize such conferences in the regions and farms, where the products can be displayed alongside the source at the point of production. He cited Kenya's national agricultural shows as an example, where the government commits resources and farmers bring their best products. Best products can be chosen and rewarded. This will encourage participants to learn, improve, and innovate in order to be the winner of the next show. He expressed his hope that the F2F conference and marketplace will follow this path.



“I hope to see the small farms conference and marketplace hosted by local partners in the regions where several real products can be displayed”

Peter Kariuki, F2F Technical Advisor

5.12. PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATES TO THE CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE

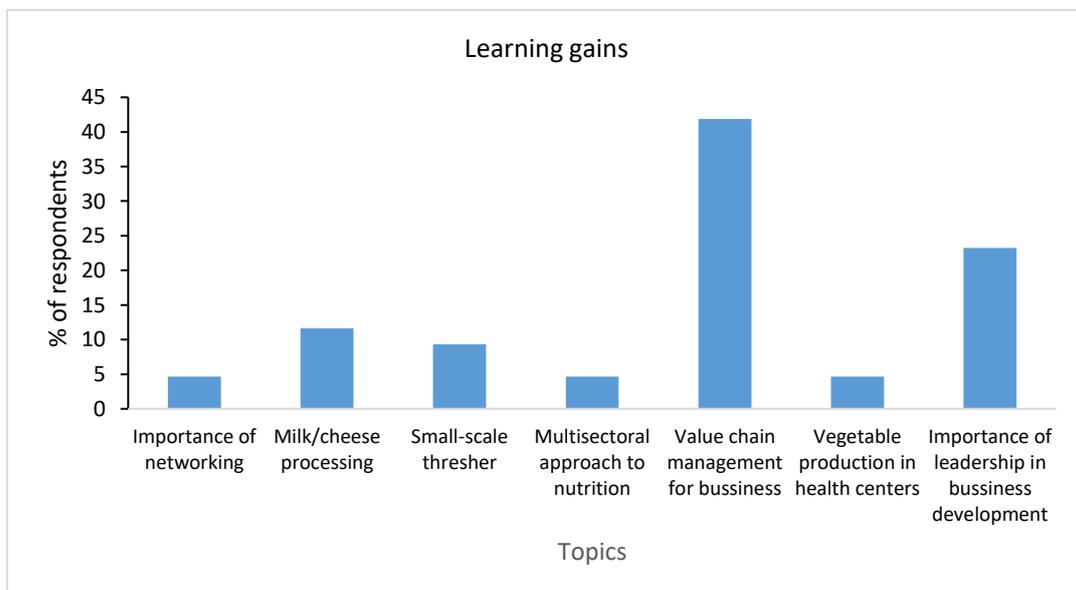
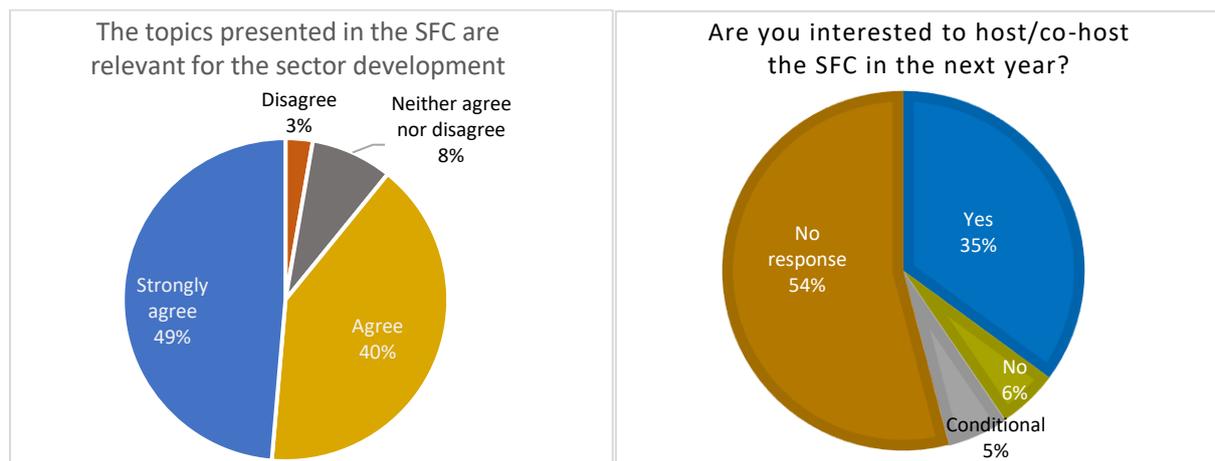
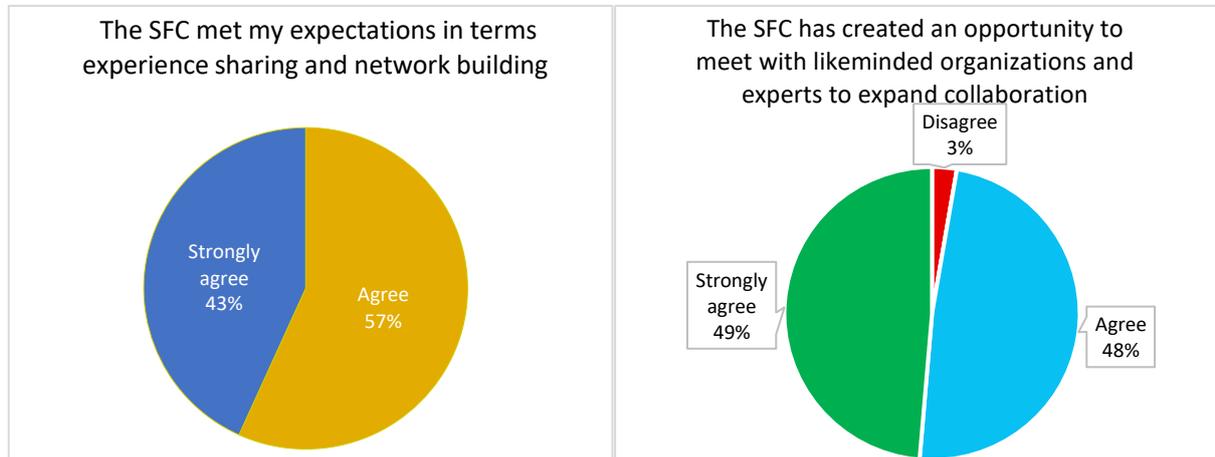
Mr. Zemedu Zewdie and Mr. Haile Deressa presented award certificates to members of the conference planning committee from CRS and host organization for their contributions to the success of the event. Mr. Abraham Kassaye, Mr. Ambachew Worku, Melikite Tadesse, Wintana Mebrate, Mulugeta Tadesse, and Luwam Yohannes received award certificates from Mr. Zemedu.



6. ANNEXES

Annex 1: Summary analysis of feedbacks collected from participants using a questionnaire checklist

At the end of the conference, a checklist questionnaire checklist was distributed to collect participants' feedbacks on their satisfaction, learning gains and recommendations for improvements. Below are the feedback results on some of the questions.



Annex 2. SFC feedback collection form

Please check [√] your level of agreement in the boxes

No.	Questionnaire	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
1	The Small Farmers Conference met my expectations in terms of sharing experiences and building networks					
2	This conference has created an opportunity to meet with likeminded organizations and experts to expand collaboration					
3	The topics presented in the conference events are relevant for the agricultural sector development in Ethiopia					

4. What new knowledge/technology/innovation/ you learnt and like to adopt in your organization / business?

- -----
- -----
- -----

5. With which conference participant (organization) you formed linkage to collaborate in the future?

- -----
- -----
- -----

6. a) Is your organization interested to host/co-host the Small Farms Conference in the next year? ---

b) What is your suggestion to make the Small Farms Conference a sustainable national event?

7. Any recommendation for effective planning of the SFC in the future

Name of respondent: -----, Organization: -----, Contact: -----

..... **Thank you!**

Annex 3. List of participants of the SFC

No	Name	Organization	Type of organization
1	Yared Abebe	Yaya Dairy Farm	Private agri-business
2	Mohammed Abuana	Mohammed Dairy Farm	Private agri-business
3	Gebreyohannis Wudima	Farmer	Farmer
4	Fikadu Belachew	Farmer	Farmer
5	Kifle Lentiro	Wolkite University	Public (academic) institute
6	Abraham Mulatu	Wolkite University	Public (academic) institute
7	Ermiyas Ashenaf	Wolkite University	Public (academic) institute
8	Dr. Tadesse Birhanu	Salale University	Public (academic) institute
9	Gutu Deme	Salale University	Public (academic) institute
10	Dr. Hailu Gebru	Salale University	Public (academic) institute
11	Demisew Meshesha	Addis Alem Agricultural Development	Private company
12	Kasaye Cheru	Lume Adama Farmers' Union	Farmers' organization
13	Gudisa Gizaw	Lume Adama Farmers' Union	Farmers' organization
14	Adem Jambo	Bora Dembel Farmers' Union	Farmers' organization
15	Temesgen Ababau	Bora Dembel Farmers' Union	Farmers' organization
16	Muhedin Teha	Meki Catholic Secretariat	Civil society organization
17	Amintu Esmael	Meki Catholic Secretariat	Civil society organization
18	Million Sitota	Meki Catholic Secretariat	Civil society organization
19	Melkamu Fantahun	Lay Gayint Coop Union	Farmers' organization sector
20	Dr. Mitiku Bekele	Jimma University	Public (academic) institute
21	Yonas Derebe	Injbara University	Public (academic) institute
22	Alemayehu Assaye	Naseba Animal Nutrition	Private sector
23	Ebenezer Alemayehu	Naseba Animal Nutrition	Private sector
24	Temesgen Afework	Naseba Animal Nutrition	Private sector
25	Fikadu Reta	Hawassa University	Public (academic) institute
26	Yordanos Reta	Hawassa University	Public (academic) institute
27	Admasu Amenu	Selam Hawassa Business Group	Private company
28	Feyisa Hundessa	Haramaya University (volunteer)	Public (academic) institute
29	Girma Kebede	Harar Catholic Secretariat	Civil society organization
30	Lakew Bizuneh	Harar Catholic Secretariat	Civil society organization
31	Dr. Abdi Mohammed	Haramaya University	Public (academic) institute
32	Mehadi Usmael	Haramaya University	Public (academic) institute
33	Dr. Melkamu Bezabih	Debremarkos University	Public (academic) institute
34	Yibeltal Tarekegn	Debremarkos University	Public (academic) institute
35	Habtie Ras	Gozamen Union	Farmers' organization
36	Dawa Nura	Gozamen Union	Farmers' organization
37	Eyob Eticha	Alema Farms	Farmers' organization
38	Ashenafi Sisay	Alema Farms	Private company
39	Tamirat Kore	Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research	Public Institute
40	Tariku W/Senbet	Bahir Dar Catholic Secretariat	NGO
41	Dr. Melkamu Alemayehu	Bahir Dar University (volunteer)	Public (academic) institute
42	Emebet Mekonen	Emebet and Children Dairy	Private agri-business
43	Afewerk Hailu	Ethio-Wetlands and Natural Resources Association	NGO

No	Name	Organization	Type of organization
44	Tadele Teshome	Ethio-Wetlands and Natural Resources Association	NGO
45	Leben Tsegaye	Guenet Church Development and Welfare organization	NGO
46	Abraham Kasaye	Guenet Church Development and Welfare organization	NGO
47	Bekalu Genene	Metemamen Microfinance	Private company
48	Mulualem Fanta	Metemamen Microfinance	Private company
49	Wondewosen Dejene	Ministry of Agriculture	Public organization
50	Ephrem G/Meskel	Shayashone	Private company
51	Michael Wendimu	Shayashone	Private company
52	Haleluya Abebe	CAMS engineering	Private company
53	Yigerem Terefe	Ethiopian Management Institute	Public enterprise
54	Dawit Assefa	Fintrac	USAID Program
55	Peter Kariuki	CRS - EARO	CRS
56	Dr. Moti Jaleta	CIMMYT	International Research Institute
57	Dr. Masresha Tessema	Ethiopian Public Health Institute	Public Institute
58	Fesseha Tekle	Ministry of Health	Public organization
59	Shimelis Shiferaw	Kombolcha Poultry Resource Development	Public enterprise
60	Kedir Amano	Robe Catholic Secretariat	NGO
61	Kemso Chalisso	Robe Catholic Secretariat	NGO
62	Wubu Taye	Kombolcha ATVET Collage	Public institution
63	Aschalew Birar	Kombolcha ATVET Collage	Public
64	Emawayish Menbere	Robe Catholic Secretariat	NGO
65	Tsigereda Tafesse	Tsigereda Consulting PLC	Private company
66	Zelalem Tafesse	Tsigereda Consulting PLC	Private company
67	Dr. Alganesh Tola	Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research	Public institution
68	Abebe Belay	Selale University	Public (academic) institution
69	Teshome Tessema	Selam Children Village	NGO
70	Zemedede Zewdie	CRS	NGO
71	Tiruset Haile	CRS	NGO
72	Wintana Mebrate	CRS	NGO
73	Ambachew Worku	CRS	NGO
74	Mulugeta Tadesse	CRS	NGO
75	Melikte Tadesse	CRS	NGO
76	Luwam Yohannes	CRS	NGO
77	Helina Fisseha	CRS	NGO
78	Ibsa Teshome	CRS	NGO
79	Adey Kebotal	CRS	NGO
80	Assefa Degefu	CRS	NGO
81	Haile Deressa	CRS	NGO

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