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The FFS approach in the Arab world: the Egyptian experience

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Farmer Field Schools: Emerging issues and challenges**

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Abstract

An often-heard statement about the Egyptian FFSs and FLGs is that they are “not real FFSs”.

In 1996 and 1997 two Egyptian-German projects started implementing IPM FFSs in Egypt on cucumber, tomato, citrus, mango and cotton. Although these projects used FFS concepts as originally developed in Asia, several modifications were made, to succeed within the context of the Egyptian-Arabic culture. Soon after introduction, the FFSs were renamed to Farmer Learning Groups (FLGs). More than 15,000 FLGs involving 175,000 farmers have been organized.

The FLG approach contributed considerably to the new extension methodology. However some original aspects related to the FFS approach were dropped during the modification process. The FLG sessions turned into discussion sessions with relatively small groups of farmers, while sessions rarely lasted more than two hours.

In 1999, Egyptian-Dutch projects in the Fayoum started to organise pilot FFSs, again based on the Asian concept, but using the experience of the Egyptian-German projects. In 2001, the Fayoum IPM Project (FIPMP) started an FFS implementation programme in which 1500 FFSs are planned in four years. The FFSs curriculum focuses on IPM, but is placed in a broad range of crop management topics. Field-crop FFSs last for one year, following a cropping cycle of 2 or 3 crops. Fruit-tree FFSs have a less intensive 2-year programme. Separate FFSs are held for female farmers. Facilitators are government extension officers. A major challenge is to stimulate the facilitators and their superiors, to promote learning by doing and farmers' experimentation, which implies losing some control over the learning outcome. The FIPMP promotes this through reintroduced learning fields. A second challenge is a low-key financial support system to facilitate sustainability.

Introduction

Several international FFS specialists, who visited Egypt as a consultant of one of the projects implementing Farmer Field Schools (FFSs)/Farmer Learning Groups (FLGs), have stated that the FFSs and FLGs in Egypt differ too much from the “real” FFSs as they are being implemented in Asia. Therefore, they found it difficult to refer to these FFSs/FLGs as FFSs or even as adapted or modified versions of the FFS. Both FFSs and FLGs in Egypt started with the “original FFS concept”, as it has been developed in Asia, in mind. Through the years the “original FFS concept” has been modified, to succeed within the context of the Egyptian-Arabic culture. In this modification process elements of the “original FFS concept” have been lost and others have been added. It can be questioned if, during this adaptation process, the FFSs and FLGs have lost too many elements of the “original FFSs concept” to consider them still as FFSs. But, certainly a large number of Egyptian farmers have benefited from the FFSs and FLGs and they still do. The introduction, modification and adaptation process of the FFS concept in Egypt has gone different ways, resulting in different products which makes the process interesting, not only for Egypt but also for sharing with others involved in FFSs.

Introduction and development of FFS and FLG in Egypt

In 1996 and 1997 two Egyptian-German projects started implementing FFSs in Egypt, the Integrated Pest Management Project (IPMP) and the Cotton Sector Promotion Program (CSPP). In 1999, the Egyptian-Dutch Fayoum Horticultural development project (FaHDP) started with implementing their first FFSs in Fayoum Governorate, followed a few months later by the Egyptian-Dutch Fayoum Integrated Pest Management Project (FIPMP). Beginning of 2001 the FaHDP merged into the FIPMP, when the FIPMP moved from the preparation into the implementation phase.

Egyptian-German Projects

After the first phase (1992-1995) the IPMP started in 1995 with putting more emphasis on the introduction of a plant health concept through a new extension approach. Based on the FFS concept, as developed in Asia, and with the help of a number of FFS consultants, the project started to developed training courses on four crops (mango, citrus, cucumber and tomato) and to train master trainers and extension agents in two pilot governorates.

Already in this stage the discussion started whether the developed farmer-training activities should be called FFSs. Farmers expressed problems with the term “school” and it was replaced by the term “learning group”. In some of the old reports of the IPMP the farmer training activities were referred to as “IPM Farmer Field Learning Groups”. But very soon after this the term “field” was also dropped and it became “Farmer Learning groups” (FLG). Since then, the FLG became the common name for these season-long farmer-training activities organized by the Egyptian-German projects.

The first Farmer Learning Groups (FLGs) were established during the winter of 1996/1997 on cucumber, tomato and mango. FLGs on citrus, vegetables, grapes, herbs, potato, strawberry and apricot were established by the IPMP project during the following years. Since 1998 the project managed to establish also FLGs in three other Governorates. Till 2002, the IPMP has managed to establish 2844 FLGs attended by a total of 26,482 farmers (see table 1).

Table 1: Farmer learning groups (FLG) established and farmers reached by the Egyptian-German IPM project per year per Governorate

Season Governorate	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02
Ismailia	128	263	228	235	211	--
Beni Suef	56	170	167	173	172	240
Qalubiya	--	--	25	76	117	80
Sharkiya	--	--	--	100	135	170
Menoufia	--	--	--	--	--	98
Total FLGs	184	433	420	584	635	588
Farmer*	1513	4780	4382	5895	5098	4814

* Number of farmers who have attended at least 5 sessions of the FLG.

Soon after the IPM project established the first FLGs, the CSPP started to establish FLGs on cotton. This program managed to establish a large number (12279) of FLGs, reaching nearly 150.000 farmers, in only six years time (see table 2).

Table 2: Farmer Learning Groups Established (1997 – 2002) by the Cotton Sector Promotion Program

Governorate	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Dakahlia	128	486	397	263	819	1226
Beni-Suef	64	274	96	112	412	363
Menoufia	--	72	372	258	573	624
Sharkia	--	142	328	216	639	662
Gharbia	--	--	--	72	501	498
Minia	--	--	--	80	264	232
Beheira	--	--	--	--	384	468
Kafr El Sheik	--	--	--	--	504	606
Menoufia	--	--	--	--	--	624
Qaliubia	--	--	--	--	--	144
Total	192	974	1193	1001	4096	4823
Farmers *	2500	13,500	14,500	12,000	49,000	58,000

* Average number of farmers reached per FLG in 1997 and 1998 was 14 and after 1998 it became 12.

**Farmer Field Schools on animal production
by
EFARP**

The Egypt-Finland Agricultural Research Project (EFARP) was established in 1990 to strengthen applied research in Ismailia Governorate. When moving into their third phase in 1998, they shifted the objective from support to local research towards improving the availability and utilisation of local research findings on farm level. Using the experience of the Egyptian-German IPM project with implementing FLG, the EFARP started to develop and implement FFSs on animal production.

During the winter season of 1999/2000, the first extension agents and veterinarians were trained as facilitators and the first 76 FFSs on animal production were established. The main focus of the FFS curriculum is on improving forage production, animal feeding and basic features in animal care and health treatment. The FFS sessions are organized on a bi-weekly basis for one full year. Till today, EFARP managed to continue training more facilitators and to implement hundreds of FFSs on animal production reaching thousands of farmers.

Egyptian-Dutch Fayoum projects

The Fayoum Horticultural Development Project (FaHDP) started in 1984. In 1995, a gender group was established focussing on working with female farmers in the Fayoum Governorate. In January 1999, during the 4th and last phase of the project, this gender group started with a Training of Facilitators (ToF) and three Farmer Field Schools for female farmers. The ToF and FFSs were developed with the help of a FFS specialist formerly working for the FAO Intercountry Programme and a master trainer/facilitator from the FAO-IPM project in Sudan.

The FFSs developed and implemented during the last two years of the FaHDP were all female FFSs, addressing the cultivation of crops which female farmers grow in Fayoum such as cucumber, tomato, medicinal & aromatic plants as well as other, non-agricultural topics of importance to female farmers. In total 42 female FFSs were implemented, involving 939 female farmers (see table 3).

Table 3: Farmer Field Schools established (1999 – 2000) by the Fayoum Horticultural Development Project (FaHDP)

Year	1999		2000			
Type FFS	Cucumber	Nili Tomato	MAP	Cucumber	Nili tomato	Total
No. FFS	3	6	5	5	23	42
Farmers	75	147	117	106	494	939

The Fayoum Integrated Pest Management Project (FIPMP) started in October 1998 with a preparatory phase of two years. During this period a number of male and female facilitators were trained in two ToFs with the help of international short-term consultants with IPM-FFS experience in Sudan and South-East Asian countries. Parallel to the TOFs, 13 FFSs were established.

In January 2001, the FIPMP moved into the implementation phase and a serious start was made with scaling up of the FFSs in Fayoum. Continuous TOFs are running and more than 300 FFSs have already been established involving more than 7000 farmers (see table 4).

Table 4: Farmer Field Schools established (1999 – 2000) by the Fayoum Integrated Pest Management Project (FIPMP)

Year	1999*		2000*		2001		2002	
	FFS	Far.	FFS	Far.	FFS	Far.	FFS	Far.
Male FFS field crops	2	40	7	140	85	2125	61	1525
Female FFS field crops	1	30	3	90	22	550	54	1350
Male FFS fruit crops	--	--	--	--	60	900	20	300
Total No. FFSs / farmers	3	70	10	230	167	3575	135	3175

* Planning phase of the project.

Farmer Learning Groups

When the Egyptian-German projects started to implement their first FLGs, the Egyptian agricultural extension culture was still dominated by a high involvement of government in the agricultural production of a limited number of crops, for example cotton. For these strategic crops, the government extension units were assisting farmers with agricultural inputs, cultivation advices and marketing support. The government extension units even sprayed against certain cotton pests. For other crops, farmers received very little extension support.

To provide this intensive support for the cultivation of these strategic crops, the government had to establish a large extension support organisation. Between 1978 and 1982 all graduates from agricultural universities were offered extension jobs by the government. This has resulted in a very high density of agricultural extension workers. One village extension worker for 130-150 farm-households was, and still is, usual in Egypt. In 1984, the government policy changed. Working more towards liberalization, the government stopped employing more people. Still, it will take time before the large number of extension workers hired between 1978 and 1982 will retire.

In line with its policy towards liberalization, the Egyptian government welcomed the initiative of the two Egyptian-German projects to increase the involvement of the farmers in agriculture extension. But for the extension organization, used to follow an extension approach based on the Training and Visit (T&V) concept to transfer technologies to the farmers, the participatory extension approach was something totally different. Only a few NGOs in Egypt had obtained some experience in participatory extension. Most of the government field staff and farmers had never experienced working with each other in a “participatory” atmosphere. When the projects started to ask the village extension workers trained as facilitators¹, to mobilize farmers for the FLGs, it turned out to be very difficult to organize groups of 25 farmers. Most of the extension workers were used to work mainly with individual farmers. Although the original FFS is addressing a group of 25 farmers, the FLGs started with inviting 15 farmers, but regularly ended up with less than 10 farmers per session. During a CSPP survey carried out in 1998/99 the number of farmers attending the FLG meetings decreased during the cotton season by 40%. As result of this low average number of farmers reached per FLG, the number of farmers reached by the impressive number of FLGs (more than 15,000) organized by the two projects, is relatively low (less than 175,000). As such, a first adaptation of the “original FFS concept” had taken place.

A second adaptation is the average length of an FLG session. The “original FFS” session normally lasts for 3-4 hours. In the FLG it lasts for 2 hours only. Farmers are used that officials visit them and that the government makes it attractive for them when they are asked to participate in an extension activity. Therefore, it was difficult for the FLG facilitators to ask the farmers to invest more than two hours of their time in an extension activity. On the other hand, the extension workers were also not used to spend more than four hours per day on their extension activities, including travel and preparation.

A third, but maybe a more common adaptation, is the frequency of the sessions. Do the farmers in the “original FFS” meet every week, in the FLG on vegetables and cotton the farmers meet on a bi-weekly basis and in the FLG on mango and citrus on a monthly basis.

¹ The FLG facilitators of the CSPP received a one-week basic training course on principles of participatory Extension and an two-weeks advance course on Participatory Extension and Communication Skills.

As result of this, the FLGs on vegetables and cotton do not cover more than 7-8 sessions. With an average session length of 2 hours the FLG facilitators spend only a third of the time (14-16 hours) with the farmers compared with their colleagues in the “original FFS (40-50 hours).

As a member of the governmental extension organization, the village extension officers are responsible for implementing official agricultural policies. In that position, they were used to give farmers the official crop technical cultivation advices and farmers were used to receive those clear advices from them. When the village extension officers started to facilitate FLGs they found it difficult to offer the farmers principles instead of practices. This has resulted in the following observation that FLG sessions are more focussed on understanding of the official agricultural recommendations instead of educating farmers to become better decision makers in their own farming system. This also explains why there are hardly any field experimentations carried out by farmers during the FLGs and most FLG sessions have turned into discussion sessions.

In general it has been concluded that as result of the pressure to reach large numbers of farmers rapidly, insufficient time was reserved for training at all levels. During a presentation of the GTZ Extension in February 2000 the following problems in training were identified:

- Still too much lecturing by facilitator, not enough dialogue
- Little use of interactive dialogue to promote farmer self-learning and skills
- Little systematic farmer experimentation
- Insufficient strengthening of farmer management and networking skills
- Farmer still has insufficient knowledge of more complex issues: total picture of pest management, relationship between pest management and other practices, e.g., plant distance, fertilization, weed management, etc.

Realizing the characteristics of the Egyptian agricultural extension culture at the time of introduction, which was still mainly focussed on transferring “improved” technologies to farmers, the FLGs were certainly a huge step forwards to increase farmers’ participation in agricultural extension in Egypt. But, much of the educational impact of the original FFS concept, to educate farmers to become better decision makers, was lost in the development of the FLG. Therefore, it is also correct to conclude that during the adaptation process of the FFS concept, it was right of the Egyptian-German projects to change the name into Farmer Learning Groups.

Farmer Field Schools in Fayoum

Two years after the two Egyptian-German projects started to implement their FLGs, the Egyptian-Dutch projects started piloting with the FFS approach in the Fayoum Governorate. Making use of the experiences obtained by the two earlier projects more priority and time was given on training the first group of facilitators (ToF) and development of the FFS curricula. With the help of international FFS specialists, the FaHDP and FIPMP started with establishing only a few FFSs, following as much as possible the original FFS concept. After two years of piloting, the real scaling up of the number of FFSs in Fayoum started with the implementation phase of the FIPMP in 2001.

As in the original concept the FFSs in Fayoum meet weekly in case of the FFS on field crops (like cotton, tomato, beans), but on a monthly basis in case of the FFSs on fruit crops. The

number of farmers participating in a FFS on field crops is on the average between 22 and 25. In the FFS on fruit crops it is 15. The lower number of farmers participating in the FFSs on fruit crops is a result of the fact that the concentration (farmers/sq km) of fruit growing farmers in the specific fruit growing areas of Fayoum is on the average lower than the concentration of farmers growing field crops. To facilitate these groups of 25 farmers, the projects decided to appoint two facilitators for each FFS. FIPMP is planning to shift to one facilitator per FFS after the facilitators have obtained enough experience in facilitating FFSs. In some cases this has already started. The main problem facilitators face in managing a group of 25 farmers, is in organising the farmers in effectively working sub-groups. Most facilitators find it difficult to let these sub-groups (normally three) work on their own. They have the feeling that the farmers cannot manage the work by themselves, but it seems more likely that the facilitators find it difficult to lose some control over the learning process by giving responsibility to the farmers. Besides being facilitators, they are also a member of Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation responsible for implementing its agricultural policies. To improve farmers' capacity to manage working in small groups, the projects should pay more attention to group management issues and to introduce more effective "group dynamic" activities in the FFSs. However, especially the introduction of more effective "group dynamic" activities will take time. Many of the "group dynamic activities" and "icebreakers", developed for the FFSs in Asia, have been tried out by the projects in Egypt. Most of them did not work, especially with the male farmers. The Arabic-Egyptian culture differs too much from the Asian cultures. Egypt has to start developing its own set of "group dynamic" activities and "icebreakers" for their FFSs.

Female Farmer Field Schools

For cultural reasons separate female FFSs have been organized to be able to reach also the female farmers.

Female farmers in Fayoum do cultivate a number of specific crops as medicinal & aromatic crops and tomato. Besides discussing the cultivation of these crops also some other topics are being discussed during the FFS sessions as family health issues, etc.

There was already a tendency in Egypt of women becoming more involved in agriculture. Through the participation in the female FFSs, this process has been further accelerated. Many female farmers in the FFSs have also indicated that their husbands have started to take their advices more seriously.

Still, the Egyptian-Dutch projects have not managed to improve the average length of a FFS session. As in the FLGs, the FFSs in Fayoum do not last for more than two hours. The main reason for this is that the facilitators find it difficult to do practical things with the farmers during the FFS sessions. The social structures and customs in the local farming communities make it difficult for the facilitators to organize practical group activities. If something practical needs to be done, for example in the FFS learning field, it will be done after the FFS session and/or by hired labour. Another reason for these short FFS sessions is that the extension workers are still not used to spend more than four hours per day on their extension activities, including travel and preparation. A large number of facilitators has more than one job.

The challenge for FIPMP is to increase the number of practical and group dynamic activities in the FFSs. More emphasis has been paid in using the FFS "learning fields" for some farmers' experimentations. Before, the "learning fields" were mainly IPM demonstration plots on which the farmers could carry out their Agro-Eco System Analysis. Farmers now do

select the crops and the practices to be studied in the FFS “learning field”. Farmer experimentation during the FFS sessions is still limited but there are more and more examples of farmers, individually or in small groups, who have started to do some little experimentations on their own fields, parallel to or after having attended a FFS. Although relatively little farmers’ experimentation is done at the FFSs, the FFSs have managed to stimulate farmers to start implementing it on their own fields.

Besides paying attention to those elements that still need to be improved, the Egyptian-Dutch projects have gone further in the adaptation process of the FFS concept. Farmers do not only need education on IPM in relation to a single crop. Normally, farmers in Egypt grow more than one crop in a diversity of crop rotations. Already in a very early stage, farmers started to ask the facilitators to discuss the other crops also. When the two projects (FIPMP and FaHDP) merged into one, the new FIPMP started with FFSs on field crops dealing with a number of crops and crop rotations. To be able to do this the total length of an FFS was extended to one full year. The FFSs start at the beginning of the cotton season (March) or winter season (October) and the FFS graduates after one year. Most FFSs include cotton, maize, tomato, faba bean, onion and wheat. Some of them also include medicinal and aromatic plants, cucumber and melon. To make it not too difficult for the facilitators, at the beginning of the FFS the farmers are asked to select one main crop for the summer season and one for the winter season. These two selected crops will be studied in the learning field of the FFS. The other crops can be studied through visiting the fields of the participating farmers.

Besides dealing with a large number of crops, the FIPMP has also chosen for a very broad interpretation of IPM. Some do prefer to call it Integrated Crop Management instead of Integrated Pest Management. The objective of the FFSs organized by the FIPMP is to educate farmers in growing a healthy crop in an environmentally friendly and economically viable way. This broad interpretation of IPM gives the facilitator the possibility to include all crop, pest, soil and water management practices in the curriculum of the FFS.

The broadening of the FFS curriculum by including, for the farmers all relevant crops and agricultural management practices, has made the FFS a more complete tool in agricultural extension, especially when it is implemented in close coordination with an On-Farm Research component as in FIPMP. During the FFSs often topics are identified that need further research before a satisfactory advice can be formulated. These topics are being channelled to the On-Farm Research component. After some literature research a proposal is being worked out for on-farm research. Under the supervision of a specialist, the on-farm research trials are being carried out on farmers’ fields. The farmers themselves, in close coordination with a facilitator, are responsible for implementing all agricultural practices in the research trials. The results of the trials are channelled back into the FFSs.

Although the FFSs in Fayoum differ in a number of characteristics from the “original FFS concept” they are certainly “real” FFSs. They follow the main principle of educating farmers to become better decision makers. That this is happening can be concluded from cases where farmers continued meeting each other after graduation of the FFSs and continued with implementing some farmer experimentations. Further, the farmers’ attendance during the FFS sessions does not drop during this long period of one year. With 50-52 sessions, in total 100 hours of training, the FFSs in Fayoum are twice as long as the “original” FFS. Farmers are willing to invest their time because they are learning what they like to learn during the FFSs. Farmers do consider the FFS as their own.

Sustainability of the FFS in Egypt

The major challenge of the projects in Egypt implementing FLGs and FFSs is to work towards a situation in which the Egyptian Government can and is willing to sustain the FFSs and FLGs after the projects. Besides bringing the development and advantages of the FFSs and FLGs under the attention of the decision makers in Egypt, the projects also have to work on making the FFSs and FLGs more cost-effective.

The projects, individually or through its participatory extension network, do support different kinds of initiatives to discuss at Governorate and national level the developments in extension and IPM as well as initiatives to formulate national policies on IPM and agricultural extension. To be able to sustain the FFSs and/or FLGs, these participatory extension approaches have to find their place in the national extension policy of Egypt.

With its limited number of sessions the FLGs are relatively inexpensive. According to a study of the Cotton Sector Promotion Program there is no significant difference in costs between the “old” Technology Transfer and the “new” participatory extension Approach based on FLGs. This is not the case with the FFSs in Fayoum. Although the effectiveness is much higher, with an average of 50 sessions per group of 25 farmers, the FFSs in Fayoum are also more expensive than the FLG. Still FIPMP is paying for most of the costs of running the FFSs and training of facilitators. Therefore FIPMP will work the coming years on involving farmers in covering the costs of the FFSs. Some pilot projects on cost recovery are scheduled for 2003. FIPMP has also started with training a selection of facilitators to become trainers of facilitators. This will reduce the costs of training new facilitators and will make it possible for the Fayoum Agricultural Directorate to keep on training new FFS facilitators after the closure of FIPMP in 2004.

Modification and Adaptation process of the FFS concept in Egypt

Since the FFS concept was introduced in Egypt it has gone through a continuous process of modifications and adaptations to make it a successful approach within the context of the Egyptian culture and specifically in its agricultural extension culture. Most changes in the concept took place during the development of the Farmer Learning Group. Number of participating farmers, length and number of sessions are reduced. But, more seriously, facilitators lecture too much, use little interactive dialogue and systematic farmer experimentation, as well as insufficient strengthening of farmer management and networking skills. Especially these last observations have negatively influenced the efficacy of the FLGs. As a result of the pressure to reach large numbers of farmers rapidly, insufficient time was reserved for training at all levels and consequently many of the important elements of the FFS concept were lost as well as its efficacy to educate farmers to become better decision makers.

During the introduction and development of the FFSs in Fayoum Governorate more effort and time was and still is being paid to train the facilitators. After an introductory training of two weeks, the facilitators keep on receiving 2-3 days per week training for one full year. During the other days, they facilitate FFSs under the supervision of one senior facilitator. Besides technical topics, the training pays a lot of attention to how to facilitate these technical topics during the FFS sessions. After one year, the facilitators still receive one day per week training, mainly from their colleagues. During these training days, a lot of observations and

ideas from field level are channelled back to project management. Most of the modification and adaptations made in the FFSs were based on these observations and ideas received from field level.

One last element that has influenced the FFS modification and adaptation process in Egypt is that no Egyptian staff member were sent abroad for training on facilitation of FFSs or to become a trainer of FFS facilitator in one of the Asian countries where the “original” FFSs are being implemented. Egypt has little first hand experience with the “original FFS concept”, it is all based on videos, publications, consultants and expatriates. Maybe this explains why in the modification and adaptation process, many of the original FFS elements were relatively quickly dropped, resulting in an alternative participatory extension approach based on the FLG concept.

Conclusions

The modification and adaptation process of the FFS concept in Egypt has been very interesting. Starting with the same “original FFS concept” in mind the process went different ways, resulting in different products.

The first product was renamed into the “Farmer Learning Group” and has been implemented on a large scale in Egypt, benefiting many farmers. Realizing the characteristics of the Egyptian agricultural extension culture at the time of introduction, the FLGs were certainly a huge step forwards to increase farmers’ participation in agricultural extension in Egypt. But, as a result of the pressure to reach large numbers of farmers rapidly, insufficient time was reserved for training at all levels and, consequently, many of the important elements of the FFS concept were lost in the development of the FLG as well as its efficacy to educate farmers to become better decision makers. It was therefore correct to change the name into Farmer Learning Groups.

Several years later, starting again with the “original FFS concept” and making use of the experiences obtained in developing the FLGs, FFSs were developed in Fayoum Governorate. More priority and time was given on training the first group of facilitators (ToF) and development of the FFS curricula. Although the FFSs in Fayoum still differ in a number of characteristics from the “original FFS concept” they are certainly “real” FFSs. They educate farmers to become better decision makers.

Most of the adaptations made in the FFS concept are a result of cultural and social characteristics of the local farming communities and Egyptian extension organization. Separate FFSs for male and female, shorter sessions and fewer practical group activities are examples of this. But, also most of the “group dynamic activities” and “icebreakers”, developed in Asia, do not work in Egypt. The Arabic-Egyptian culture differs too much from the Asian cultures.

The adaptation process of the FFS in Fayoum also has added new elements. Because farmers do not only need education on IPM in relation to a single crop, the FFSs started to deal with a more crops and crop rotations simultaneously. To be able to do this the total length of an FFS was extended to one full year. Further, a very broad interpretation of IPM was chosen. This broad interpretation of IPM gives the facilitators the possibility to include all crop, pest, soil and water management practices in the curriculum of the FFS. The broadening of the FFS

curriculum, by including all relevant crops and agricultural management practices, has made these FFSs a more complete tool in agricultural extension.

Elements that have influenced the modification and adaptation process of the FFS and FLG in Egypt are, beside the already mentioned cultural characteristics and the pressure to reach large numbers of farmers rapidly, the limited first-hand experiences with the “original FFS concept”.

The challenge for the ongoing development of the FFSs in Fayoum is to increase the number of practical and group dynamic activities in the FFSs and to make the FFSs more cost effective through involving farmers in covering part of the costs.

List of references:

IPMP project documents

CSPP project documents

EFARP project document, 1990-2001 highlights

FaHDP project documents

FIPMP project documents