



# Africa soil health

<b>Locations</b>	Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda
<b>Dates</b>	01/07/2015 – 01/06/2019
<b>The problem</b>	Integrated Soil Fertility Management (ISFM) is recognized as an effective solution to poor soil fertility. However there is a lack of clear, relevant, action-orientated development communications for use by smallholder farming families and those that serve them. The formal channels of information extension/ farmer's groups tend to target primarily male heads of household – when farming in Africa is a family business.
<b>What we are doing</b>	<p>ASHC is piloting an approach that targets different members of the smallholder farming family with nuanced but consistent messages that address their information needs. So, young people can be targeted through youth media such as comic and social media or curriculum support materials for use in schools. Women can be reached by entertaining radio programs and heads of household by point of sale material in agro-dealers and traditional extension methods. In each country a group of partners will be convened by ASHC.</p> <p>The process starts from a country scoping document setting out needs and opportunities. The next document is an Information Needs Assessment which looks at gaps and perceived short comings in the current stock of development communications and materials offered by the private sector on farm inputs. From this CABI selects an ISFM approach and technology brief sets out all of the stages a farmer needs to follow to apply the improved technology.</p> <p>ASHC is exploring new ways to share the tools and approaches. The ISFM materials library, hosted on the ASHC website, is being developed to house materials for others to adopt and apply to their own contexts. Most are offered under Creative Commons licenses.</p> <p>Publications will be produced through the life of project, sharing lessons learned about how the challenges of creating and disseminating development communications that change behaviour can be met.</p>

## Results so far

In Tanzania the group of partners is called the Legume Alliance and it has developed its first campaign “Maharage Bingwa – Champion Beans”. This encourages families to use improved seeds and other inputs to create food security, incomes and add nitrogen to their depleted soil.

Between June and September 2015, a 16-week radio series has been produced and 8 programmes aired; 2 Shujaaz comics have been published, highlighting the benefits of bean farming; prototype point of sale materials have been developed for use in agrodealers and a manual for extension workers will shortly be ready for piloting in 2 districts in Tanzania. All of these materials have been developed using participatory approaches.

A database of over 4,000 bean farmers has been developed and they are being systemically interviewed on their use of bean inputs with a view to creating a better planning tool for matching supply and demand of inputs.

Based on lessons gathered from inception work and pilot activities in Tanzania, information campaigns targeting priority crops will be developed and implemented in additional countries.

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