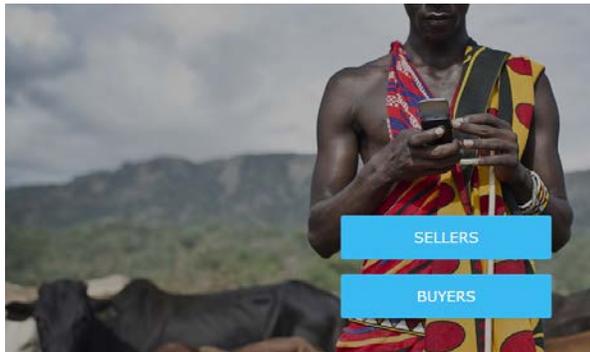


Promoting ICT to Access Agriculture Market Information among Rural Youth

A Policy Brief

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Low returns from agriculture may be one factor discouraging youth from participating in the sector. One reason for unnecessarily low returns is a lack of access to agricultural market information. Producers need to be able to locate potential buyers and to identify where people are willing to pay higher prices for their produce. If information and communications technology (ICT) can provide such agricultural market information and raise returns, agriculture could attract more youth. It would reduce unemployment and also promote rural development as well.



ICT—even simple cell phone technology—can help farmers access market information. Producers can use their phones to post offers to sell. They can use their phones to learn bid prices in different markets.

However, previous studies suggest that most farmers use ICT mainly for social purposes. And, previous studies have also indicated a lower rate of ICT use among women.

What motivates (or deters) the intention farmers, and women farmers in particular, to use their cell phones to access agricultural market information? Those questions are answered here.

Tanzania's *National Implementation Strategy for ICT Policy 2016/17-2020/21*, the *Agricultural Sector Development Program 2017*, and the *National Strategy for Youth Involvement in Agriculture 2016-2021* have all noted a need to promote ICT use among farmers, specifically young farmers. To inform the necessary promotion campaigns, this policy brief specifically documents the determinants of young farmers' continual intention to use ICT.

Findings on Gender Bias

Stereotype was found to negatively affect women intention to use ICT likewise the study also found that the influence of the perception on the value received from using phones to find for agriculture for market information was stronger for female farmers than male. In that case while planning for promoting ICT among young farmers there is no need to put much consideration on gender issues with other determinants of intention to use ICT. Rather the gender factor can be considered when dealing on how to overcome the stereotype effect towards the use of ICT and benefit versus cost on ICT use.



Together with stereotype and gender when users' assess cost and benefits of using ICT, there are other important determinants of youths' intention to use their phones for agricultural market information. The factors, discussed below, are reasonable and common-sensical. Our research shows that ICT adoption by young Tanzanians depends on the following factors.

1. Does it Work

Young rural Tanzanians want to use ICT for agricultural market information -- if it works. The academic term for perceived usefulness is "performance expectancy." If they believe that a particular cell phone app will in fact increase their access to valuable market information, they will adopt it.



2. Easy to Use

Young Tanzanians are more amenable to adopting the cell phone technologies that they believe will be easier to use. The academic term for 'believe it will be easy to use' is "effort expectancy."

3. Value exceeds cost

The extent to which the value of using the cell phone ICT for market information exceeds the cost of it positively impacts the intention of young Tanzanians to use it.

4. Reliable, credible, and accurate

It's an investment. The cell phone ICT must offer information that is accurate, credible, and reliable.

5. If it's not known, it won't be used

Young Tanzanians have to be aware that their cell phones and ICT can help them access agricultural market information in order for them to use it. This common-sense factor simply cannot be overlooked.

6. Facilitating Conditions

For widespread adoption of cell phone ICT by young farmers to access market information, some conditions must exist, such as network service access.

In sum, these five factors should both guide the development of cell phone ICT for agriculture and inform projects that will effectively promote the use of ICT for accessing agriculture market information among young Tanzanians.

For Further Reading:

Sassi, A (2019) *A Gendered Analysis of Youth's Intention to Use ICT for Accessing Agriculture Market Information*; Publisher, etc.