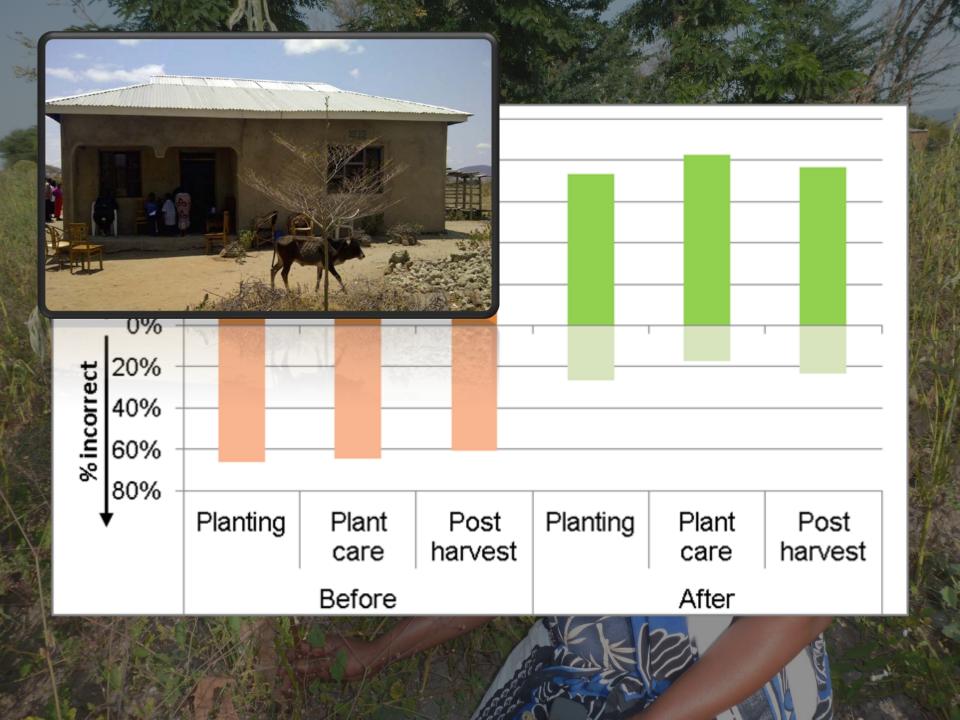
# **Training Farmers with ICT**





# Introducing Theresia Willbrod

- Sesame farmer from Babati
  - Like many farmers around Babati, Theresia tried to grow a number of crops but struggled to earn enough to send her children to school. The family lived in a rough mud hut and had little hope for the future.

#### Good Agricultural Practices

Critical for improving yields

 We in Farm Africa helped Theresia to increase her sesame crop from 4 bags to 20 bags (improved seeds played a part but GAP was critical)

How did we do it?

# **Traditional Training**

Farmer Field Schools

Demonstration Plots

Expensive in staff time

Limiting project reach

# Introducing Modern ICT

Demonstration (2 minutes)

#### Benefits:

- Greater control over the quality of material reaching farmers (no Chinese whispers effect)
- Videos can be re-watched
- Adopters don't have to travel to fixed site at specific time - can learn at a time that suits them

#### Reaching the Hard to Reach

- Two more pluses for rural development:
  - Suitable for women who cannot attend FFS due to household duties
  - Attractive to youth

Downside: no person to person interaction

#### Results of Training by ICT

- 96% of farmers introduced changes to their farming practices after using the software
  - Mostly at land preparation and planting stages

- Knowledge of GAP increased from 36% to 78%
  - Compares to 71% using traditional FFS
  - Not statistically different
  - But clearly successful

#### ICT is Scalable

- Efficient scale up is the holy grail of rural development
- Up front investment in training materials and software (~\$50,000)
- After that cost per new user is almost zero

 Now Farm Africa scaling up: from 1 district to 3 districts at substantially reduced costs

#### **Bonus Features**

- Easily Updateable: as new knowledge emerges (e.g. suitable responses to a new local pest or disease), tablets can be updated far more easily, and at lower cost, than physical retraining of Contact Farmers
- Like the websites that track our every click, it is easy to incorporate monitoring system
  - So we can see which elements farmers struggle with and need improvement
  - And track overall achievement (vital data for investors)

### **Impact**

 Theresia's annual income from Sesame went up from \$85 to \$1,800!

 She has built a proper family house and can now give her children three meals a day.

#### Caveat

GAP training not enough on its own

- To achieve this higher income levels also need:
  - Better quality seeds
  - Good local markets (marketing support ... next speaker ...)

### Hardware Challenge

 Original pilot involved 10 tablets purchased for farmers, all returned (one almost lost)

Cannot expect same to happen again

 Goal: switch to smartphones, and help farmers save, so eliminating subsidy (aid dependence)