

How to... develop print material for low-literacy farmers

This paper is taken from an ASHC commissioned paper - Literature Review and Guidelines: Effective print material for low-literacy populations by Laurinda Cheng, under the supervision of Louise Mailloux, ASHC gender specialist. This paper can be found in the research findings section of the how to... section of the website.

Guidelines and best practices:

- Create print material that includes related pictures with minimal text. The print material can be used to supplement practical face-to-face training sessions as follow-up or reference resources for farmers.
 - Picture-based print materials can only be used to convey simple sequences of actions, thus should not be used as the only form of instruction/training provided.
 - Employ a local artist to develop relevant and locally appropriate illustrations for the print materials. Illustrations that are simple and do not provide a lot of detail are more comprehensive.
 - Black and white free-hand line drawings with computer enhanced shading are easy to photocopy and thus more likely to be made available to smallholder farmers by local agencies responsible for reproducing and distributing materials.¹
 - Consult with local women and men smallholder farmers and local NGO and government workers when developing illustrations. These local groups can help determine which illustrations are easily interpretable and provide a clear message. At the same time, these groups can provide feedback on the appropriate sequencing of pictures in the instructions. Illustrations and print material should be modified based on feedback to create the clearest picture-based form of instruction possible.
 - Test print material in the field with local smallholder populations and local NGO and government staff before producing and distributing print materials on a large scale. Feedback and responses from testing should be used to finalize the print material to meet the needs of the local providers and end-users.
 - Ensure you have the resources and appropriate time-frame to develop effective print materials. In terms of resources, you will need access to local contacts, including farmers, local NGO and government workers, and extension staff to help you produce the material. As well, you will need to reserve time to consult these local groups and test and modify the print materials based on feedback.
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