

"This project Agroecological Transition, Responsive Extension Approaches (ATREA) is funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), co-funded by the European Union (EU) and supported by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)."

## Policy Brief

# Responsive Extension Approaches for Agroecology Transitions in Kenya

## Background

In Kenya, various stakeholders including NGOs, government and development organizations have undertaken various initiatives to promote agroecology. These efforts are geared towards advancing sustainable agriculture and food systems that address agricultural productivity, economic viability, ecological sustainability, and social equity and justice (Altieri, 2015; Altieri & Nicholls, 2020). The dissemination of agroecological principles has predominantly been facilitated through agricultural extension and advisory services (AEAS) that serve as the primary channel for farmers to gain access to information, knowledge, and practices related to agroecology (Davis et al., 2020). Despite these efforts, accelerating integration and uptake of agroecology principles and practices is crucial for sustainable agricultural system that can withstand diverse challenges, meet the increasing demand for food and contribute to improved livelihoods. The gaps in realization of optimal benefits from agroecology is attributed to limited responsiveness of extension approaches to agroecology. This is attributed to their diverse philosophies and principles that weakly integrate agroecology as well as limited knowledge co-creation for agroecology due to disjointed actions. Understanding the responsiveness of extension approaches to agroecology is important for effective promotion of agroecology.

Using a cross-sectional survey design, a survey was conducted in 2023 in the western parts of the country specifically, Kakamega, Bungoma and Siaya counties. The counties were selected purposively owing as they have been the focal point agroecology promotion initiatives spearheaded by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), through the Global Programme „Soil protection and rehabilitation for food security” (ProSoil) activities. A total of 301 respondents were interviewed comprising of 239 smallholder farmers, 45 extension staff, 9 input dealers, 3 government officials, 2 traders and 2 community leaders. Household questionnaires and focused group discussions were administered to farmers, and key informant guides to extension staff, input dealers, government officials, traders and community leaders.

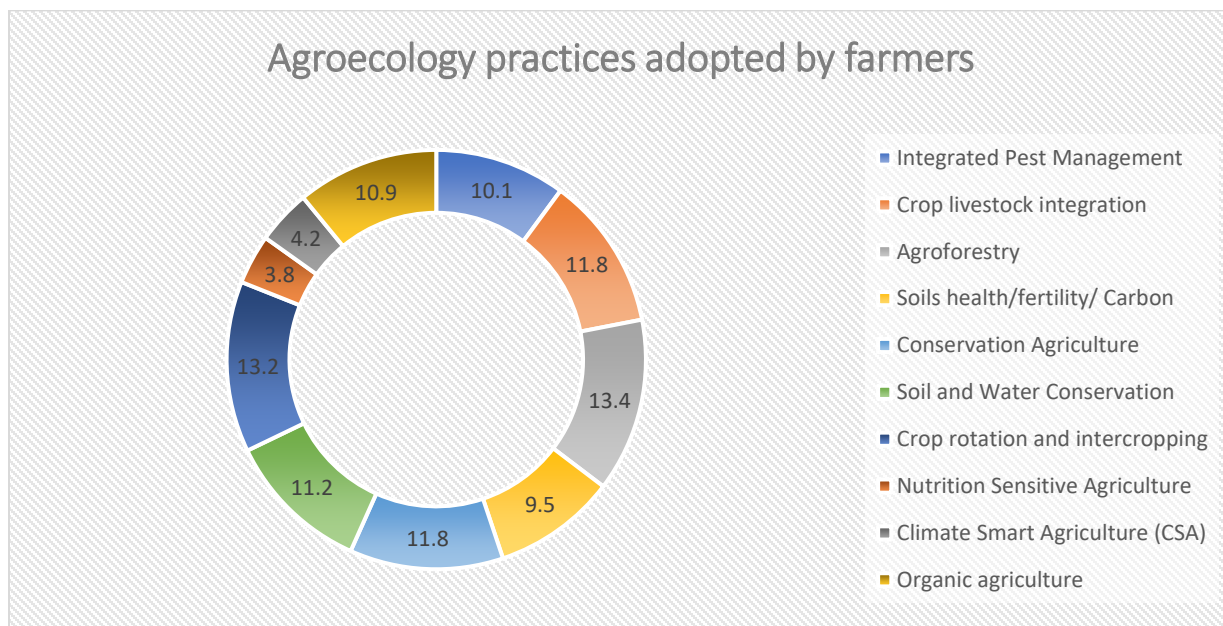
Data collected from the study was used to prepare the policy brief. The policy brief provides evidence-based information on Agroecological Transition, Responsive Extension Approaches (ATREA) project is funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), co-funded by the European Union (EU) and supported by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), and implemented by the African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS) and Benin Country Forum.

"This project Agroecological Transition, Responsive Extension Approaches (ATREA) is funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), co-funded by the European Union (EU) and supported by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)."

## Evidence and Intensity of adoption of agroecology practices among farmers through different extension approaches

### Agroecology practices adopted by farmers

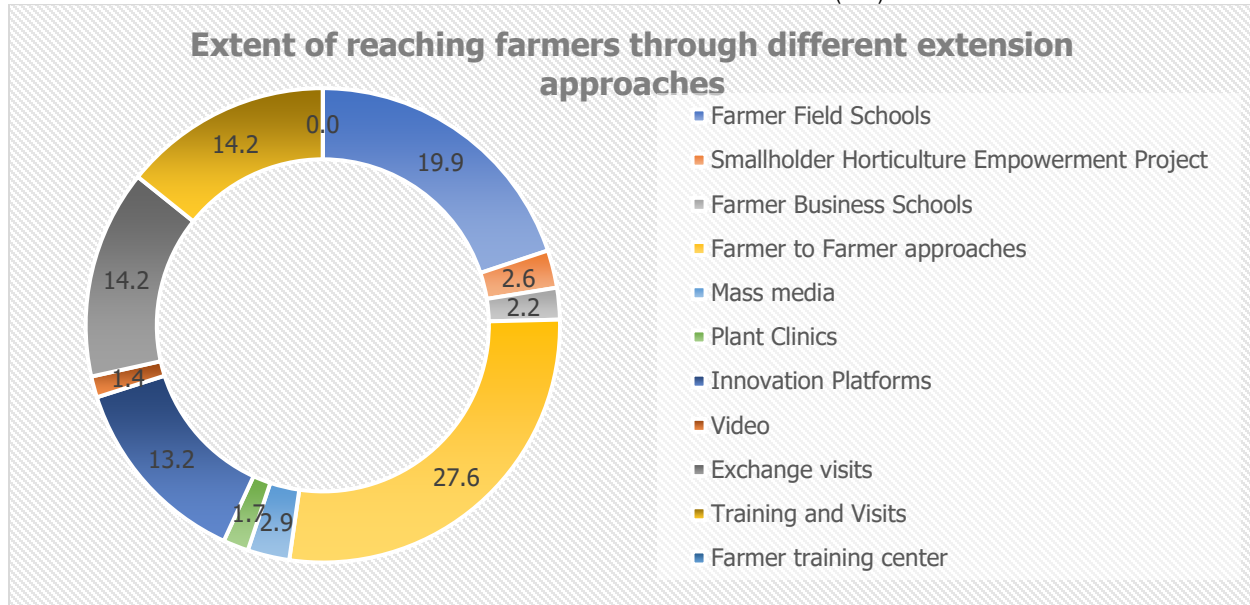
There is evidence of farmers taking up various agroecology practices. The prominent agroecology practices among farmers are agroforestry, crop rotation and intercropping, conservation agriculture, soil and water conservation, organic agriculture and integrated pest management. Nutrition sensitive agriculture and climate smart agriculture are the least dominant.



### Contribution of extension approaches in reaching farmers

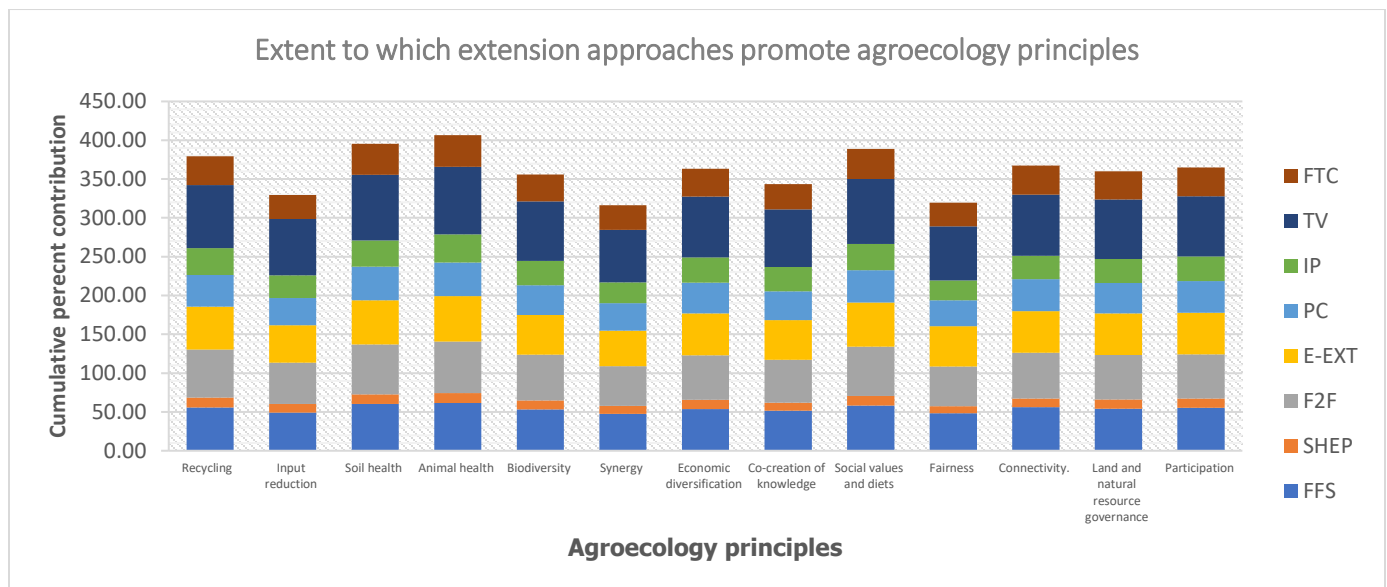
There are diverse extension approaches used in Kenya to promote agroecology but with varied dominance in promoting agroecology. The dominant extension approach among farmers are farmer to farmer approaches, farmer field schools, train and visit and exchange visits, and innovation platforms. Plant clinics, farmer business schools, smallholder horticulture empowerment project and mass media are the least dominant. Farmer training centers were found not to be used by any farmers to access agroecology extension services.

"This project Agroecological Transition, Responsive Extension Approaches (ATREA) is funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), co-funded by the European Union (EU) and supported by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)."



### Responsiveness of extension approaches to agroecology principles

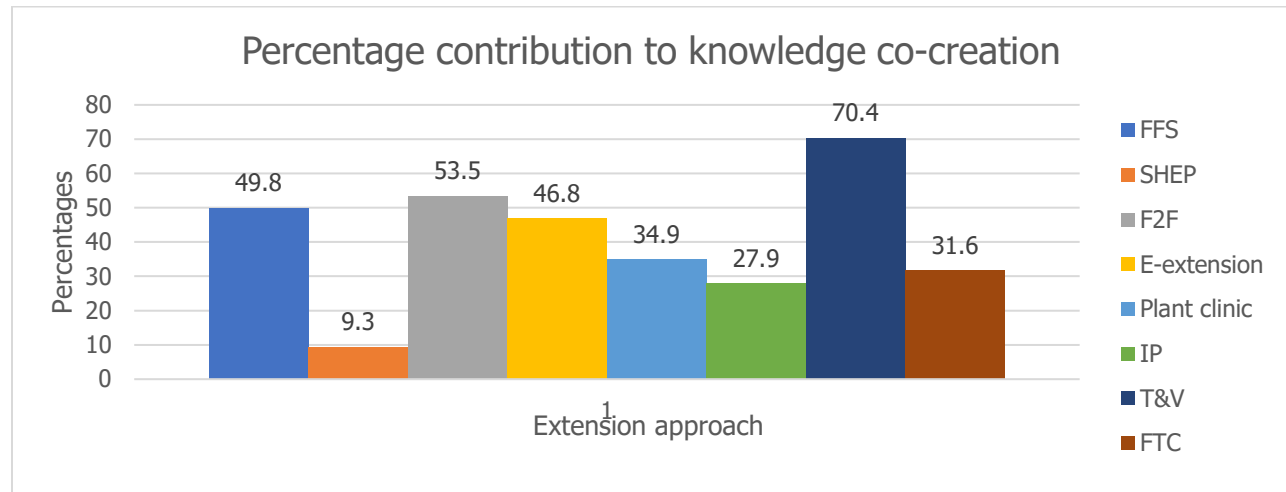
The extension approaches used to promote agroecology in Kenya are responsive to agroecology principles. However, responsiveness varies across the extension approaches in their overall responsiveness and for each specific principle. Train and visit is the most responsive extension approach to all agroecology principles. E-extension, FFS and F2F perform generally the same with just average levels of responsiveness. IP, FTC, and PC, although they also perform the same, they have low responsiveness. SHEP is the least responsive.



"This project Agroecological Transition, Responsive Extension Approaches (ATREA) is funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), co-funded by the European Union (EU) and supported by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)."

## Contribution of extension approaches to agroecology knowledge co-creation

The different extension approaches<sup>1</sup> implemented in Kenya contribute to knowledge co-creation. Train and visit contribute the highest, followed by farmer to farmer approaches. SHEP contribute the least, while the rest of the extension approaches marginally below average.



## Recommendations for agroecology transition in Kenya

The following recommendations are proffered to advance responsive extension approaches for agroecology transition in Kenya:

- Capacity building of extension providers on agroecology, its principles and practices. This would enable them support promotion of all the practices in view of their interlinkages and mutually beneficial relationships when implemented together on the farm.
- Diversification of extension approaches promoting agroecology by aligning their principles and philosophy to agroecology.
- Strengthen multistakeholder collaborations for agroecology knowledge co-creation.
- Concerted efforts among diverse extension providers and extension providers in promotion of agroecology.

## References

Altieri, M. (2015, January 1). *Agroecology: Key concepts, principles and practices*.

<sup>1</sup> Farmer Field Schools (FFS), Smallholder Horticulture Empowerment Project (SHEP), Farmer-to-Farmer (F2F), E-extension, Plant Clinics (PC), Innovation Platforms (IPs), Train and Visit (T&V), and Farmer Training Centers (FTC)



"This project Agroecological Transition, Responsive Extension Approaches (ATREA) is funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), co-funded by the European Union (EU) and supported by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)."

- Altieri, M. A., & Nicholls, C. I. (2020). Agroecology: Challenges and opportunities for farming in the Anthropocene. *International Journal of Agriculture and Natural Resources*, 47(3), 204–215. <https://doi.org/10.7764/ijanr.v47i3.2281>
- Davis, K., Babu, S. C., & Ragasa, C. (2020). *Agricultural extension: Global status and performance in selected countries* (0 ed.). International Food Policy Research Institute. <https://doi.org/10.2499/9780896293755>