

Fig 4: Comparison of members and non-members access to services

## Call to action

Cost-effective capacity building of grassroots institutions will enable communities' focus on attaining a triple bottom line goal of increasing agriculture productivity, livelihood improvement and environmental sustainability. Training on soft skills for local level facilitators and appropriate legal frameworks will enhance integrated planning, a key element for landscape level work.

Noting the cardinal position in development attached to smallholder farming systems we propose the following:

- **Establish mechanisms for integration of vertical governance processes with community level activities.** This will improve efficiencies and provide capacity building benchmarks and milestones
- **Develop and support policy processes for the articulation of Landscape level outcomes.** A systems approach to agricultural productivity enhancement, livelihoods improvements and With this in mind, we call upon the governments of SSA to commit to the following:
- **Promote innovation and diffusion of tools methods and approaches that enhance capacities for rural institutional strengthening.** A clear understanding of grassroots level institutional engagement will provide better value for money in capacity development. It will also provide a basis for evaluation of activities undertaken as well as expected outputs.

- **Improve the legal framework and policy processes to support inter-sectoral capacity development.** Inter-sectoral capacity enhancement will provide space for an integrated approach to community level development. This process is crucial for empowering the smallholder farming systems and enabling scale factors.
- **Establishing a policy forum** to promote stronger multi-stakeholder involvement in rural grassroots activities. It should also form basis for articulating necessary conditions for private sector involvement.

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# Strengthening Rural Institutions Strategies for effective capacity building of grassroots communities

## Executive summary

Enabling the efficient and timely benefits of development to a diverse community membership is a great challenge to governments all over the world. In developing the rural areas, enhancing agricultural production, improving natural resource management and expanding opportunities for trade has long been recognized as Key to improved livelihoods. Increased spending by governments in the production and environment sectors has, however, not guaranteed success. How can sustained benefits of development be attained by a majority of the citizenry, especially those in the rural areas?

Research and development partners have stressed the need to promote a sustainable intensification of agriculture. Tackling world hunger calls for the increased food production. There is a need to double the food produced in Africa in the next 30-40 years to avoid starvation of an ever-increasing population. Capacity development is central to this prospect. It will involve the provisions of 'social infrastructure' for rural development to enable smallholder farmers inculcate agro-ecological techniques at the grassroots level.

A successful capacity development process provides skills, technologies, partnerships, and socially and legally relevant support systems. We develop the building blocks for a social infrastructure-a pathway for linking individuals, smallholder farmers, service providers, private sector operatives, and local government agencies amongst other stakeholders. The pathway details steps for successful strengthening of grassroots institutions hitherto a missing link for large-scale rural development.



Photo courtesy of SRI team members

## The challenge

**Increasing food productivity, ensuring sustainable production systems and poverty alleviation** in sub Sahara Africa calls for robustly performing smallholder farmer systems. It is imperative to have **capacity enhancement** amongst grassroots community members to enable viable solutions for the complex technical, institutional and policy issues facing agricultural development in the region.

Research on seed and inputs systems, agricultural extension, finance and credit, rural infrastructure, market participation, managing rural non-farm diversification, trade policy and food price stabilization are aspects that require adequate support and participation of communities at the grassroots level.

Lessons generated over time have shed some light on Key questions related to smallholder farmer development:

What are the capacity development strategies necessary to for wholesome grassroots community participation?

How can we ensure equitable opportunities for stakeholders while enhancing social capital among community members?

How can the classical extension services approaches be transformed to influence organizational capacities that unlock potentials in large-scale rural development?

How do we ensure systems win-win for development and conservation?

## Redefining Capacity Building

Food security, energy crises and climate change are major challenges experienced in sub-Saharan Africa that are best handled by repositioning and strengthening rural institutions within the development discourse. The complexity in smallholder farmer systems calls for holistic capacity enhancement methods, tools and approaches that go beyond the traditional practice. The brief highlights a participatory capacity building process model that involves individual groups, coalition of groups, platforms and partnerships developed and tested in six sites in East Africa (Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya).

The model (Figure 1 on the next page) describes a locally driven and collaborative action research process. It defines steps in capacity enhancement of rural institutions making it possible for governments to finance, develop legislation and normative frameworks for implementation.



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Investing in rural people

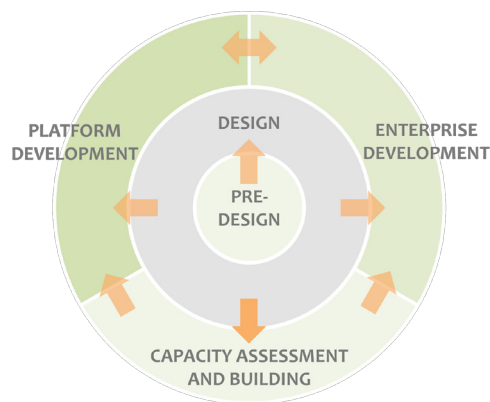


Figure 1. Rural institutional strengthening Model

Source: SRI Project documents

The model enables the following functions:

Analysis and characterization of groups within a project scope  
Identification and planning of holistic stepwise capacity development interventions

A guided process of resource allocation at the various capacity development stages identified

Table 1

Providing a case for rural grassroots institutional development: Conformity of different policies among various Regional Economic Communities (REC'S)					
Global Treaties and Conventions	REC Provisions			Rural Institutional Aspects	
	EAC	COMESA	IGAD	SADC	
UNFCCC Article 6 (b) (ii), Article 9 (2)(d) Article 12 (7)	Agriculture & rural dev. strategy 4.6.2	COMESA CAADP program		SADC CAADP program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnerships with stakeholder to train farmers on sustainable agriculture and opportunities for financial and technical support.</li> </ul>
RIQ Declaration Principle.21 Principle 5 & 6	Article 120,	COMESA gender policy 4.0 (c) (e) (k)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunities for capacity development of youth in sustainable development.</li> <li>Local communities will be provided with incentives for conservation e.g the introduction of REDD/PES projects in partnership with relevant stakeholders</li> </ul>
CEDAW Art 14(ii)	Art 122, <sup>1</sup> 3.1.3.3 (vii) and 3.4.4 <sup>2</sup>	4.0 (c) (e) (k) <sup>3</sup>	IGAD strategy Section IV	Article 15, 17, 18 <sup>4</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rural women groups can actively get involved in NRM e.g. sustainable forest harvesting, water harvesting and also economic activities.</li> </ul>
International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture Art.9, Art 13 (c)	3.2 (ii) (vi) , 4.1.2 <sup>5</sup>	COMESA is working with CAADP in Providing technical & financial support <sup>6</sup>	<sup>7</sup>	SADC is working with CAADP in Providing technical & financial support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve agriculture to boost economic development, reduce poverty and eliminate hunger</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> EAC Treaty.

<sup>2</sup> EAC Climate Change Policy

<sup>3</sup> COMESA gender policy.

<sup>4</sup> SADC Protocol on gender development.

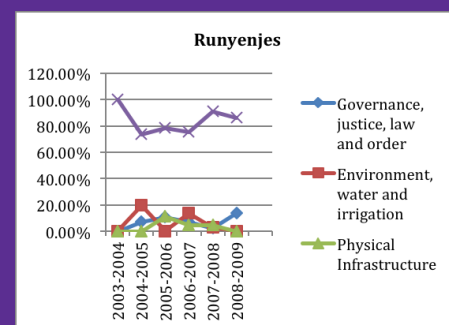
<sup>5</sup> EAC Agriculture and Rural Dev. Policy

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.nepad-caadp.net/role-regional-economic-communities.php>

<sup>7</sup> There is an Agriculture and Development division to deal with the issue.

## Case study 1

### Access to access credit

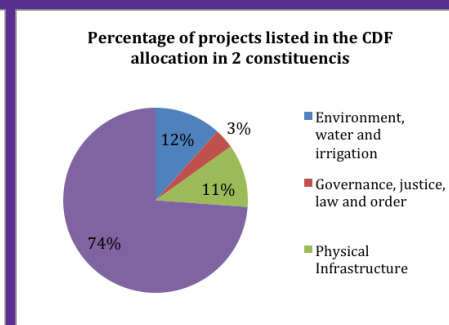
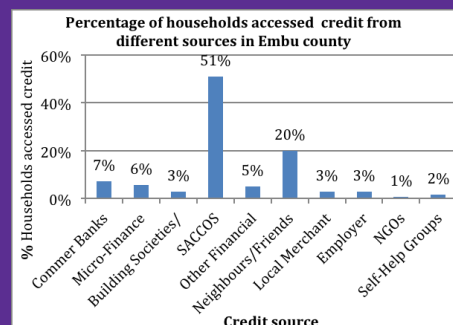
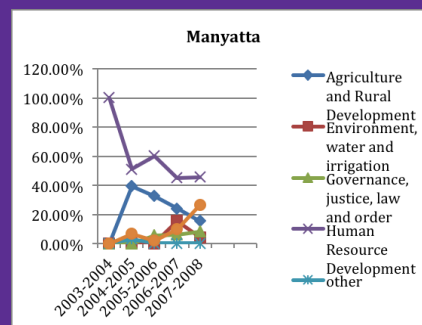


Case study 1 illustrates some of the development initiatives undertaken in Embu County in Kenya. The constituency development fund does have a high allocation percentage for human resource development however, requisite support services such as access to formal credit only reach less than 31% of the total rural households.

### Case Study 1: Seeking for opportunities for enhancing capacity building Embu County

Embu County is located in Eastern province of Kenya and consists of 4 constituencies. These are: Manyatta, Runyenjes, Gachoka and Siakago. The County has a population of 516,212 and a population density of 183 people/km<sup>2</sup>. 83.9% of this population lives in rural areas. There are a number of development opportunities provided under a number of projects in the county. This include the following:

### Constituency development fund allocation trends from two constituencies showing allocation from 2003-2009



(Source: Analysis of Constituency Development Fund (CDF) spending (2003-2010) available at <https://www.opendata.go.ke/Public-Finance/CDF-Projects-2003-2010/6rxd-cfvr>

(Source: Analysis of Constituency Development Fund (CDF) spending (2003-2010)

The Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in Kenya provides good lesson learning opportunity for the empowerment of rural smallholders.

## Is investments in rural grassroots institutions justified?

A review of policies and treaties from the global, and national levels, as well as the conformity of different policies amongst various regional economic communities (REC's) gives credence to the importance of capacity enhancement of rural institutions.

Table 1 shows a summary of just a few national and regional policy processes, global treaties and conventions. As indicated in the table, rural institutional aspects such as partnerships, capacity development, and participation of rural communities in environmental stewardship and livelihood improvement activities are paramount. Evidently there is need for capacity building to enable the implementation of crucial policies and treaties as well as governance structures. This as illustrated in table 1 has national as well as global development implication. However, **What opportunities exist for strengthening rural institutions at the Meso-level (district and county)?**

Poverty reduction, food security improvement and environmental sustainability aspects require more than simple training. It calls for competencies and organizational elements that integrate the internal processes of learning, application, reflection and adaptation with the external social support systems necessary for capital creation, inclusion of stakeholders and empowerment of the marginalized.

Enhanced capacity building processes do not in essence need greater financing than current levels applied by governments and research and development partners. However, they call for attention to detail, stepwise approach using simple analytical tools to provide feedback on progress. The process involves deliberate creation of partnerships amongst various actors and the involvement of government structures across sectors. Moreover, the inclusion and participation of the private sector entities is crucial for value adding and ensuring program efficiencies.

## Emerging lessons

As currently practiced, collective action though essential, is not sufficient to stimulate wide scale livelihood improvement amongst rural households.

There is need to characterize steps in multi-stakeholder processes, articulating support measures for simple partnerships, coalitions and platforms. Further, it is necessary to understand and develop landscape level goals. Landscape level objectives provide a forum for multi-sectoral collaboration, involvement of both local and national government agencies and the private sector.

## Case study 2

### Case study 2: Site level Lessons on strengthening rural institutions: Kapchorwa district in Uganda

Profile of grassroots groups in Kapchorwa district

From a profile of 187 groups surveyed in the district, 176 groups mainly carry out their activities at the local level, 9 coalitions were identified. These coalitions mainly concentrated on environmental aspects affecting well-defined landscapes. Others were involved in marketing and product value addition. At the district level, KADLACC is an innovation platform that is increasingly being relied upon by grassroots communities (figure 1).

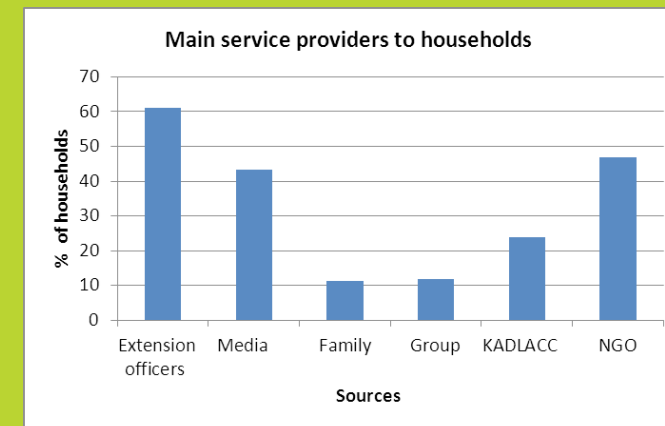


Fig 1: Grassroots level service provision

(Source: Household survey: Rural institutions and enterprise development, a case of Kapchorwa district 2013)

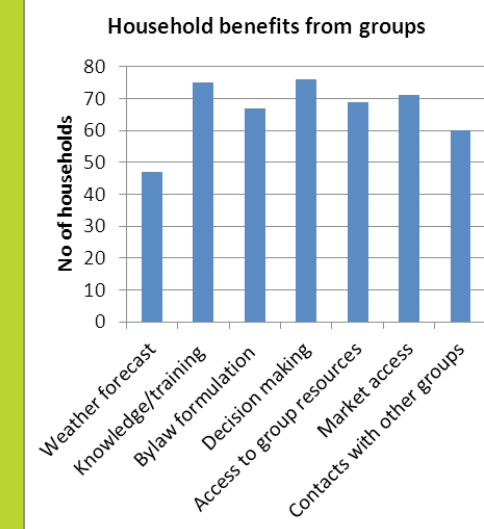


Fig 2: Household benefits from groups

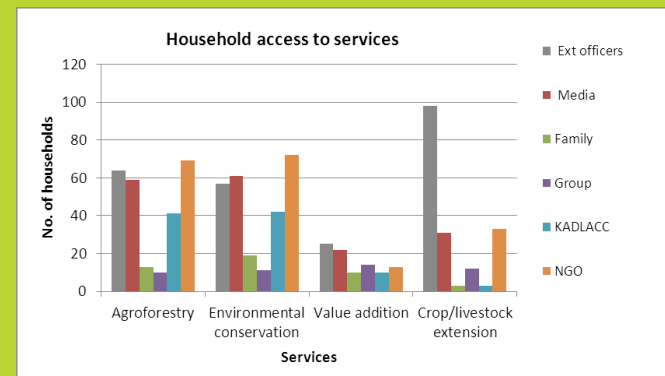


Fig 3: Household access to different services in Kapchorwa district