



**BRIEFING  
NOTE ON:**

**Linking Local Learners  
Getting Started<sup>i</sup>**

The linked local learning programme on demand-driven services got started over the period February to December 2004 in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. It enabled horizontal learning and peer exchange between local farmers and service providers to explore how demand driven services could be improved. It was not a top down programme of learning driven by national or international advisors and managers. Making demand driven services work for low income farmers and local service providers is a complex business that has to be sorted out on site in the local setting. The local learners engaged in this programme were self motivated as they were trying to earn money and make a living either as farmers or as service providers or as both. The programme was also designed to produce insights into government policy (regulation quality control, poverty) and investment programming for donors and government agencies. The programme was implemented in four stages as follows:

- **Stage one** included establishing a coordination group and mentoring team comprising representatives from ISG, LBL, DAAS, CTA and FAO and making the Linking Local Learners 'LLL' internet learning support service operational<sup>i</sup>. The coordination group met four times during the year. Stage one also started the identification of potential local learning groups in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania.
- **Stage two** concluded the self organization of learning groups and the development of learning topics to improved demand driven services and overcome information and communication management constraints. The major activity was a four day training course conducted in Uganda 21-25 June, Tanzania 28 June – 2 July, and Kenya 12- 16 July at which

some seventy trainees were trained in how to use the LLL internet learning support service.

- **Stage three** saw a functioning internet learning support service in place and the learning groups in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania engaged in internet supported lesson learning.
- **Stage four** included a regional assessment workshop conducted from 21 – 23 October in Kakamega by twenty representatives from Ugandan and Kenyan learning groups. Tanzanian groups did not participate due to time constraints and fund releases. Plans for the continuation of lesson learning were developed by Kenya and Uganda groups at the assessment workshop while the Tanzanians plan to do this at a strategic planning workshop scheduled for January 2005. The coordinators presented a preliminary analysis of learning including synthesis of critical issues affecting demand driven services at the Neuchatel Initiative annual meeting between 2 – 4<sup>th</sup> November in Denmark.

This local learning programme relied on rapid and frequent communication flows between local farmers and service providers. Cheap and rapid sharing of local learning experiences and enhancing the local learning process with the ideas of others was made possible using the internet. The Linking Local Learners 'LLL' internet learning support service allowed groups of local learners to use email and internet to stay in contact with each other over distances and helped them organize and see the advances in their learning over time. Learners used the service to conduct 'virtual' distance workshops on learning topics of their own choice.

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<sup>1</sup> The 'LLL' internet learning support service can be viewed at <http://www.linkinglearners.net>. (Log in with username = guest and password = readonly)