



**BRIEFING  
NOTE ON:**

**Insights on Policy and  
Empowerment<sup>i</sup>**

All the countries involved consider demand driven extension for farmer empowerment as a policy goal although Tanzania and Kenya still have traditional extension hierarchies from T&V systems – while Uganda has evolved through NAADS to local service provision through contracting. NGOs are explicit stakeholders in all countries – especially farmer unions KENFAP and UNFFE. There are no restrictions that would keep farmers from getting organised by themselves or with the assistance of private suppliers. NAADS in Uganda uses contractual arrangements between farmer forums and service providers facilitated by sub-county offices – thus stimulating farmer organisations. Various NGOs and projects also stimulate farmer organisation. Linkages between research and extension are encouraged at various levels. However, except in NAADS, there is little input from small farmer groups into mainstream extension, and in no case into research. Large commercial farmers and their organisations of course have a great voice in terms of research demands.

Comments from the users of the LLL process:

*“Education system for training staff (public colleges) still creating top-down graduates. Older staff have hard time to change as well.”*

*“Financial ability of farmers for cost sharing is a constraint for getting to where the voice can be heard.”*

*“NGO’s are helping but Micro Finance Institutions can lend to organised groups although with high interest.”*

*“Market research for example is needed but KARI/NARO have no market researchers to respond to demand.”*

*“Post-harvest and agro-processing research results are needed.”*

The evidence of empowerment of farmer groups is clear. Decisions on topics, inputs and discussions are taken by the participating groups and individuals. Use of time and money to participate are based on group contributions and own assessment of the usefulness of the systems. It is

clear that extension staff and government officers involved in the learning groups both are able to demand information and experiences from other participants while also provide inputs and encouragement to local farmer groups. The LLL experience is transparent to all participants. In the case of the LLL, the “donor” is not a clear entity in that farmer groups participating are contributing their time because they see benefits directly. The “donor” does provide very important support to the programme coordination team while most mentors are provided for under separate arrangements. The issue of “poor people should be paid for attending training” is at issue only for capacity building in areas such as internet learning and assessment workshops at sites long distant from homes and beyond the capacity of most resource poor farmers that have become the main participants in the LLL experience.

Comments from the users of the LLL process:

*“Access to the Internet doesn’t mean that everybody in the team needs to have access; one person can access and print out the messages, the rest of the group works with printed copies*

*The process involves a number of different stakeholders – in that sense it is broad-based and inclusive.”*

*“A group member described a case in which someone posted information on irrigation kits, which the learning team then promoted among farmers.*

*The LLL process helps in exploring a new technology.”*

*“If one of them wanted to find out some information on a specific question, I can simply type the question and will get responses from other people. And they might not all be the same, thus I will get a range of answers to choose from.”*

*“Diversity of views on any discussion as not limited by own thoughts in own groups.”*

*“Sharing experiences allows self-improvement and ways to solve problems.”*

*“Provides new stimulation and calls for summarising and crystallising ideas especially for coordinators.”*

*“Helped networking in local area as other stakeholders also came not just the host group.”*

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