

**Knowledge Programme
“Small Producer Agency in the Globalised Market”**

**Report on the
Scoping Roundtable – East/southern Africa**

**Sarova Panafric Hotel
Nairobi, Kenya**

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Introduction

Three-quarters of the world's 1.2 billion poor people live in rural areas. Many are small-scale producers who depend on agriculture and natural resources for their livelihoods. International markets have been seen as a way out of poverty and food insecurity for small-scale producers. These markets comprise traditional food and fibre commodities, but also new markets for quality products, biodiversity, conservation, and mitigation of climate change.

Increasing volatility and stringent requirements in these markets, as well as international trade agreements, present smallholders and their organisations with multiple opportunities and risks. Higher value has to be weighed against the costs of meeting international standards and certification for quality products and the imbalance of market power when trading with large companies. Imports can push small producers out of their home markets.

The role of producer organisations, government and big business in making global and regional markets work better for development are all disputed. Each organisation has its own set of assumptions and recommendations about the risks and opportunities for small-scale farmers. Should producer organisations and their federations focus on rights-based approaches that recognise farmers' rights as citizens or market-based approaches that recognise the entrepreneurial nature of smallholder agriculture? Should government revive its traditional role in the regulation of markets in the face of uncertainties in the global economy? Can international companies change their business models to include small-scale producers in fair and equitable trading relationships?

For smallholders and their organisations to position themselves and make effective choices – in other words, to build agency – in the face of this complex agenda requires knowledge and capacity to organise their interests and take effective action. But it also requires a widening and reshaping of the debate.

The Knowledge Programme “Small Producer Agency in the Globalised Market”

Run by HiVOS, IIED, Mainumby and a global network, the programme has set out to map, elicit and integrate knowledge on the dilemmas confronting small-scale producers in global, regional and national markets. It aims to work with different actors to bring new voices, concepts and insights into the global debate. It thereby seeks to support the development community, policy makers, producer organisations and businesses in their search for better informed policies and practices.

1. HiVOS new role as a Knowledge Broker

By: Carol Gribnau – HiVOS

This roundtable meeting is an initiative of the Knowledge Programme in collaboration with IIED in London, Mainumby in Bolivia and HiVOS in the Netherlands.

HiVOS is a development organisation based in the Netherlands whose main aim is to contribute to a world in which all citizens both men and women have equal access to resources and opportunities for development. Towards this end, HiVOS most important activities have been centred on funding and capacity building.

In 2007, a new role was identified for HiVOS as a knowledge integrator. It has been recognised that in-depth insight is needed on the conditions for development that we work in, e.g. civil society building, open democracy, good markets and financial services.

The main aim of the Knowledge Programme is to create knowledge for development to feed into CSOs, governments and businesses with knowledge on:

- What are good policies and practices
- Which methods work
- Which pitfalls to avoid, etc

The Knowledge Programme also aims to bring knowledge together, identify gaps, and develop and share knowledge among all these organisations. This is not done in isolation, but in close cooperation with people from the north and south, practitioners and researchers in various sectors.

The theme of the Knowledge Programme is “small producers”, their organisations and their linkage to the markets. This is particularly interesting against the background of worldwide trends of volatile markets with price fluctuations being the mainstay, quality demands in markets, the global financial crisis, etc.

The Knowledge Programme on small producer agency began in 2009 and is scheduled to end in November 2011.

2. Presentation on the reason for the programme on small producers, markets and globalisation: Why now?

By: Bill Vorley – IIED

Most farmers worldwide (85 per cent) are small-scale producers. These small-scale producers support a population of roughly 2.2 billion people, often in the context of subsistence farming.

Until recently, small-scale production was deemed unrewarding, inefficient, out-dated, uncompetitive in local and external markets, affected by low commodity prices, and

injurious to the environment. Consequently, this sub-sector has been attracting little investment, deprived of credit facilities and technical support, to cite but a few problems.

Increasingly, debate around this form of production has moved from “crisis” to an imperative for “revival”. Small-scale production is featuring strongly in policy discussions, due to several factors: ecological, demographic, and economic. To begin with, the export-led industrialisation route for many poor countries is blocked off, as China has a dominant share of trade of this kind. Migration to urban areas has become less rewarding. But employment for a demographic bubble of young people entering the job market must be found. More and more, national food deficits are treated as issues of national security: the notion of depending on liberalised global trade to secure food supplies is deemed risky.

So policy discourse is now seeing agriculture and small-scale production as vital to reducing rural poverty, managing natural resources, and expanding overall economies. The demand for food has increased, coupled with higher commodity prices. To secure their long-term survival, agricultural businesses are sourcing agricultural commodities from both large and small-scale suppliers. With a suitable model, businesses of all sizes, large and small, can work in tandem. Small-scale production can exploit cost and other advantages with which to compete with large scale producers for both niche and commodity markets.

Likewise, globalisation has introduced new challenges and opportunities to economies in the South. Domestic markets in poor countries are open to imports from the North and China. Food-insecure countries are even securing access to huge tracts of land in poor countries to ensure their long-term supplies.

Issues

The ability to make good decisions and act on those decisions – in other words the building of agency – in face of this complex agenda, is increasingly important:

- To deal with businesses and NGOs promising new products and markets (agriculture, carbon...)
- To deal with investors (companies and governments) wanting land (land grabs)
- To deal with donors with new programmes, new funding
- To build bargaining power and to “cooperate to compete” – price, quality, quantity, certification etc.
- To commission research to answer the “unknowns”
- To make demands of the state
- To enter and influence the debate, which can be unhelpfully polarised – driven by outsiders, speaking “for” smallholders

The Knowledge Programme holds promise for addressing some of the foregoing issues through “new voices, new analysis, and insights,” to support producer organisations and businesses in the search for better-informed policies and practices.

Plenary and Discussion

Concern: Given the objectives that have been set out, the 2009-2011 time-frame of the Knowledge Programme seems very optimistic.

Response: The question of timing is important. Perhaps one of the outputs of this Knowledge Programme should be a reflection in the donor community of the 2-3 year project cycle. But much can be achieved between now and the end of 2011.

Question: How should we perceive the Knowledge Programme? Is it HiVOS, partners, or an East Africa driven programme?

Response: The programme is a network of southern practitioners, policy workers, and business people. It is not driven from HiVOS or IIED. If it is executed well, it may well survive beyond the end of 2011.

Question: How should we factor in carbon emissions and exports in our discourse?

Response: The issue of carbon emissions can be used as an argument against exports (airfreight). The problem can be restated from the viewpoint of trade justice based on the concept of “ecological space.” It is odd that a country that produces 9 tons of carbon per capita should threaten trade sanctions on a country where each citizen produces a fortieth of that amount. On this score, Bill Vorley felt that Africa had won this “moral” debate.

Question: How do we integrate knowledge and insights such that the larger private sector fits in?

Response: The network will involve big businesses as important actors. There is a need to look not just at what big businesses need to do to trade with small producers and enterprises, but also, what small businesses need to do to understand the realities of “down-stream” business customers and consumers.

Comment: Despite farming once again looking economically attractive in some parts of the world, there is evidence to suggest that drought in the East African region has damaged agricultural production. Many farmers have abandoned farming.

Response: Yes. Many farming households are food insecure and are forced to buy food at high prices. As such, there is need for a nuanced perspective on the condition and prospects of small-scale farmers in the face of higher commodity prices.

Question: How should one construe the term Agency?

Response: Agency is defined here as the ability and capacity to make informed decisions, and to act on those decisions. In the context of the Knowledge Programme, it is the ability to act

to “shape one’s own development process” from an informed position. By extension, the broader question might be whether this network is about understanding agency or building agency.

3. Presentations by participating organisations

No.	Organisation	Activities
1.	SKF Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supports small producers in Kenya and South Africa. ▪ Imports spare parts for factory machinery needed mainly by tea and sugar factories in Kenya. ▪ Also supports small producers and the state on tax administration issues.
2.	TATEDO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The overall objective of TATEDO is to enable the majority of the population in Tanzania, particularly women, to access sustainable modern energy technologies and services that contribute to poverty reduction, sustainable development, climate change mitigation and adaptation. ▪ TATEDO has 21 years of experience and works in 16 regions. ▪ They are looking at how to replace coal and other fossil fuels with alternative energy. ▪ They are working on a programme to improve efficiency in the use of firewood and coal, including improved cookers. With the old cookers, one 60 kg bag of coal would last a month, but with the improved cookers it lasts two months. ▪ They are in the process of developing the markets programme. <p><u>Key Lessons Learned</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local bottom-up processes and local institutions managed by or accountable to the poor are essential if sustainable results are to be achieved. ▪ The building of human and social capital and support for local processes are key elements of any poverty reduction strategy. ▪ Rural transformation demands a location-specific combination of investment and policy support; decisions in this regard should be country-owned and led, not pressed upon governments through prescriptive recommendations and conditionalities under the constraints of debt aid and dependency.
3.	Sustainable Agricultural Community Development Programme (SACDEP-Kenya) ¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitates sustainable development for communities in Kenya and the East African region who have low access to resources, to enable livelihood improvement through Sustainable Agriculture principles and practices. ▪ It deals directly with farmers through its Community Agriculture Programmes (CAP) sector whereby discussions are held with regard to project implementation and marketing, among other issues faced by smallholder farmers. ▪ It works in 15 districts and 5 provinces, with about 4,000 families. ▪ It works in three areas: natural resources management, relationships with markets, and research. ▪ Many of the suggested themes for the KP/LN are issues they have been working on in the markets programmes.

¹ See Appendix 2 for SACDEP’s opinion on the selected themes of the Knowledge Programme

4.	Match Maker Associates (MMA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MMA's core services revolve around sub-sector/value chain analysis and value chain development. ▪ It is a multicultural private company, based in Tanzania, with associates working in different parts of Africa. ▪ It receives funding from different sources but also works with the private sector. ▪ To work with small producers, it looks for facilitators who make contact with different groups, but it does not have direct links with small producers. ▪ Its key services include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Training and capacity development in value chain development. People from Latin America have attended its training courses. ✓ Long term programme management. ✓ Match making by (1) facilitation of linkage/joint venture between corporate, private sector and SMEs, (2) design, monitoring and evaluation of contract farming schemes and co-investments in innovative businesses.
5.	Technoserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Helps entrepreneurial men and women in poor areas of the developing world build businesses that create income, opportunities and economic growth for their families, communities and country. ▪ It works in several African countries, mainly on issues involving rural markets, but also works on urban markets. ▪ Its programmes focus on developing entrepreneurs, building businesses and industries including improving the business environment. ▪ It focuses on dairy farming, horticulture and the production of coffee and bananas.
6.	Uganda National Farmers Federation ²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Carries out policy and advocacy activities on behalf of farmers. ▪ Organises agricultural trade shows to ensure that farmers' products reach markets. ▪ Links farmers to regional bodies and helps them manage these links. Examples of regional bodies include the East African Farmers Federation, and the International Federation of Agricultural Producers. ▪ Works with more than 4,000 families. ▪ Seeks to understand how small producers can organise themselves to voice their demands within national policy. The aim is that small producers improve their organisations and their organisational systems, to be strong and independent producer organisations. ▪ Another important issue is the development and improvement of democratic systems, and how these can lead to producers influencing policy. ▪ Also seeks to raise awareness about keeping the peace – how to work with small producers so that they don't get involved in violence. ▪ How should small producers' organisations work on issues of natural resources management, ecological integrity, gender and equality?
7.	Eastern Africa Farmers Federation ³	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This Federation is the regional apex of National Farmers Federations in eight Eastern African countries.

² See Appendix 3: Uganda National Farmers Federation's opinion on fundamental principles that make a smallholder agency succeed in globalisation and market access

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Its two main roles are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Strengthening of the national organisations/members ✓ Representation of these organisations/members
8.	Arid Lands Information Network (ALIN) ⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Its mission is to enhance the livelihoods of communities through information exchange in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Ethiopia. ▪ It publishes and disseminates information on a wide range of topics on livelihood issues, concentrating on agricultural production techniques, the environment and market information. ▪ ALIN actively supports the exchange of information among CDWs through documented experiences in books, videos, CD-ROMS and journals.
9.	CUTS ⁵	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CUTS is a regional policy-based and advocacy NGO. ▪ It works with grassroots organisations in Kenya but is also starting work elsewhere in the region. ▪ It is analysing the situation of small producers in relation to markets. Most transactions are carried out under subsistence conditions. There are few export markets and they are small, mainly involving vegetables and flowers. These markets only account for 2% of production; the rest is sold in domestic markets. ▪ The average size of a smallholder's land in Kenya is 1.6 hectares and even this is shrinking. Increasingly more land is being used to produce for family consumption. This is why dealing with productivity is so important.
10.	Kenya Organic Agriculture Network ⁶	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Helps boost the motivation of organic producers by helping them link to markets for their produce, both locally and internationally. ▪ Links organic producers with markets – including supermarkets – and also works on certification. ▪ Need to understand under what conditions group marketing works properly ▪ Seeks to constantly improve the standards of Kenya Organic Produce to be at par with those abroad and have the local producers certified. ▪ Provides training for producers who want to change from non-organic to organic production. ▪ Opportunities for youth are important, considering that 80% of Kenyan farmers are 45-50 years or older

³ See Appendix 4: Suggestions on Key Themes

⁴ See Appendix 5: ALIN's notes on Guiding Themes

⁵ See Appendix 6: Key Challenges faced by Smallholders

⁶ See Appendix 7: Key questions about small producers and markets

11.	University of Nairobi – Department of Geography and Environmental Studies	<p>Key issues the Learning Network needs to follow up on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The most important question for the network is this: there may be a resurgence of small-scale agriculture, but if you look at what is happening now, producers are earning less and less from agriculture. Why is this? ▪ Why do small producers need to look for other alternatives? What it means is that they are not earning enough from agriculture. ▪ Distribution of value: The need to analyse the different stakeholders along the supply chain to see where profits are made – look at the purchasing practices of the large buyers, eg supermarkets, coffee brands ▪ The proliferation of standards: also an opportunity for workers to be empowered with information ▪ The need to make improvements on gender issues within the smallholder sector – example of coffee, which is heavily males dominated at all levels but where 70% of the work is conducted by females. Need a broader debate ▪ The Learning Network needs to be sustainable in order that the smallholder benefits through their involvement and participation.
12.	Kobarore Research and Resource Centre (KRC) - Uganda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Carries out social and action research on communities; carries out tests on how models can work and comes up with actions that best fit the approaches. ▪ KRC focuses on two key areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Empowerment ✓ Social political innovations ▪ Seeks to strengthen smallholder producer organisations and facilitate their formation to ensure that smallholder farmers can have equal opportunities and be able to compete in markets. ▪ There is a need to improve the work of small producers' organisations. Progress can only be made once producer organisations are strengthened. This network should seek to be useful to small producers. ▪ It is not easy to change either subsistence-based production systems or market-based structures. The road that small producers have to travel to make that change is not at all smooth. ▪ We need to look at the role of the private sector and how it relates to local, domestic and international markets. ▪ In the changes taking place at the international level, small producers are almost always left out. ▪ Small producers do not have the capacity to meet international standards.
13.	The National Organic Agricultural Movement of Uganda (NOGAMU) ⁷	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A membership organisation which unites farmers, producers, processors, exporters and other key stakeholders in the promotion of organic agriculture in Uganda. ▪ Provides market access to smallholder farmers. ▪ Need to understand organics both as a market and as a farming system

⁷ See Appendix 8: Key questions about small producers and markets

14.	Kenya Women Finance Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A micro-finance institution that serves a clientele of over 350,000 low-income women entrepreneurs. ▪ Its mission is to advance and promote women who are active economically in viable businesses, to empower them through developing their economic and social status. ▪ It provides business loans to members, water harvesting solutions, loans for health care and start-up business loans for young girls. ▪ It also works on training, energy use and greenhouses. ▪ It has recently begun to work with young people, because many have few opportunities. ▪ It links its clients to readily available markets.
15.	Federation Association of Uganda Exporters (FAUDEX)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Focuses on advocacy and market access. ▪ Set up in 2002 to strengthen capacities and work on issues related to exports. To begin with, it only worked with exporters (medium and large). It started to work with small producers as a sideline, but as time went by, it realised that this was an area in which committed work needed to be done in a professional way, since exporters are companies that are professional about what they do. ▪ The export supply chain is not complete unless small producers are included. Links need to be made between small producers and exporters, ensuring that exporters receive what they need from small producers but also supporting small producers so that they understand exporters' needs. ▪ This is why FAUDEX focuses on advocacy and market access. ▪ It educates its clients on different aspects of the export business, including standards. ▪ It links small-scale farmers with exporters – in conjunction with the Ugandan government, it links exporters to a group of farmers or farmers networks.
16.	Vuyo Mahlati, Reaching Out, South Africa ⁸	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vuyo now works as an independent consultant but has worked on issues related to small producers in various different settings, including the state (advising on the formulation and implementation of public policies for small producers), international cooperation, business (she is a small producer herself), and consultancy. ▪ Vuyo currently defines herself as a development activist, and she is also becoming an academic activist.
17.	Organic Producers and Processors Association of Zambia (OPPAZ) ⁹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promotes and coordinates organic activities in Zambia to address the challenges of low production levels, poor market access, poor quality of products and poor organisation and development. ▪ Works on organic certification and product certification. ▪ See little benefit from international trade – focus shifting to internal and regional markets. Domestic markets are more stable and would work favourably for the small-scale farmer.

⁸ See Appendix 9: Key reflections on small producers and markets

⁹ See Appendix 10: Small Producer Agency in the Globalised Market, by OPPAZ

Plenary and Discussion

Comment: The Knowledge Programme should focus on the following:

- Share insights on what can really work for smallholder farmers, e.g. strengthening their organisations at the grassroots level by involving them in processes such as this Programme. Why are there such different outcomes from chain development projects?
- Transform the subsistence tendencies of smallholder farmers to agri-business development.
- Research on the various local markets that smallholders can also sell their produce to.
- Evaluate the role of the private sector and how it can work closely with smallholder farmers through organised structures.

4. Group Work

Question to participants:

Identify two key issues related to small producers, markets and globalisation that are critical and that need to be discussed further.

Group	Key issues identified that need to be discussed further
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Access to markets for smallholder farmers and the type of markets, with focus on local, national and regional markets.▪ Inclusiveness – gender, the poor and marginalised, etc.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Approaches for empowering smallholder producers to supply to local and regional markets.▪ Policy framework for smallholder producer empowerment so that they can get to the market better.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Type of contractual arrangements between farmers and markets that ensure that as they produce, their market is guaranteed.▪ Creation of trust between farmers to have them linked together to collectively carry out business.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The roles and responsibilities of producers and benefits for them should be put at the centre of the Knowledge Programme.▪ How can the Knowledge Programme in its global functionality provide conditions that would allow it to be rooted down at local level?
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ What are the gender mainstreaming strategies that are practical in the short, medium and long term to ensure that smallholder producers benefit? Practical gender mainstreaming strategies should be put in place.▪ What is the best structure of farmers' organisations (at all levels) to ensure that the market/production is sustainable and beneficial to all of them? What information will benefit them?
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The voice of the smallholder farmer needs to be heard in every aspect, so that they are not left out by the entire system, i.e. in the area of marketing, standards, certification, policy formulation, market access and communication, etc.▪ Climate change – smallholder farmers should be engaged fully in mitigation, as they are

	the ones most affected.
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Having mechanisms for smallholder farmers in place to enable them to cope or find a balance between livelihood requirements and market access. ▪ How can we continue to enhance the capacity of farmer organisations to be able to provide crucial services that small farmer organisations need? e.g. access to technology to enable them to access markets.
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exploiting existing marketing opportunities (access to markets). ▪ The role of the learning network in generating and managing information relevant to farmers.
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Over 70% of the populace relies on agriculture as a source of employment, yet agriculture contributes less than 30% to the country's GDP. This is a paradox that needs to be addressed. How can agriculture be made more productive? ▪ How can the energy, skills and knowledge of young people be tapped towards agriculture?

Plenary and Discussion

- Globalisation – this needs to be harnessed to ensure its benefits go down to rural areas.
- Markets – how can we use technology to distribute markets to the crop producing areas, create employment and reduce post-harvest losses for the farmer? Communication to international markets needs to be improved.
- The global economic crisis has been instructive in terms of how its effects have been felt right down to the small-scale producer. With regard to the measures being taken to help economies recover from the crash, citing the South Africa example, focus was on the auto and mining industries receiving stimulus packages, little focus if any was given to agriculture. This sector is therefore marginalised; this needs to be addressed.
- A key question from various African countries is how many farmers can be classified as commercial? Most are subsistence-based and have little if any capacity to produce a surplus. Very few farmers have the surplus to sell and be integrated into market systems. How can this constraint be addressed?
- Those farmers who provide goods to the markets, how consistent are they throughout the year? For most of them, production depends on nature and the seasons; they are unable to be consistent throughout the year. There is a need for a strategy to be in place that would allow farmers to produce throughout the year and be able to sustain the market demand.
- Who will own this process? Need to be clear on the way forward with regard to the Knowledge Programme.
- Globalisation comes with both advantages and disadvantages. What is the stake of smallholder farmers in globalisation? Is development support adding value and accelerating the move out of poverty? How committed are we in Africa with regard to involving small-scale famers in this programme? Is it right to turn Africa into a net producer of food and biofuels to feed and fuel the West?
- How can we share the good practices that seem to produce results for small-scale farmers, using approaches used in various countries, e.g. in Latin America?

5. Presentation on Proposal for a Global Learning Network: Ideas to organise and implement the Learning Network

By: Diego Muñoz - Mainumby

Ideas to organise and implement the Learning Network

- The central pillar of this Knowledge Programme is working with a peer-to-peer Learning Network containing a diverse range of participants in Africa, Asia and Latin America.
- All will be *policy innovators*: people who are developing new insights and experimenting with new policies and new market linkages, with a wide range of stakes in the smallholder/global markets debate – producers and their organisations, business people, policy-makers, CSOs, media as well as researchers.
- The network will challenge, validate and steer academic analysis within the Knowledge Programme and drive the development of new insights.

Expected role of the Learning Network

- Bring together perspectives and insights from diverse actors on how small-scale producers are linked to and affected by global markets.
- Help to define the Knowledge Programme problem statement, define a common framework of analysis, and define priority areas for knowledge development, integration and innovation.
- Drive the development of new analysis/interpretation/integration to reshape the debate around the position of small-scale producers in global markets.
- Conduct “directed brainstorming” on the position of small-scale producers in global markets.
- Work as “Knowledge Brokers” between small-scale producer organisations and federations and the academia/global debate in both directions, linking upwards to regional and global debates and also linking to the local level: farmer organisations and federations, research institutes, NGOs, business, universities, government offices, media institutions, consumer associations, etc.

Other important issues

- In order to have a mixed heterogeneous group, the people involved should be a mix of researchers, business people, leaders from small producer organisations, policy-related, NGO-related and others. Each member has to participate in the network under his or her own terms.
- There will be approximately 15 core members. The programme is going to work in three continents, with 5 members per continent. The selection of the members is related more to the issues than to the countries.

Criteria that could be considered for members

- Members of networks (formal and informal) who are working with or related to small-scale producers
- Motivated by the proposal and willing to help coordinate the network and to invest time and effort in its construction

- Willing to *listen and learn* from others and share their experiences and knowledge
- Able to *analyse and systematise* their work and knowledge, and share it in an organised way with other groups
- Working closely with small-scale producers, markets, producer organisations and policy influencing
- Willing to work using new technologies for communication and networking

Other important issues

- *This programme has to have a strong and clear commitment to small producers.* The priority is small producers' policies, empowerment and trying to find answers and solutions to their problems.
- *Although the network is not going to be composed only of small producers and their organisations, the main reference and the main concern are going to be small producers and their organisations.*
- Since the programme will work in different continents, in each continent there should be a group or institution that will help the programme with coordination in that region. These institutions could also organise and systematise the learning produced by the programme in the participating countries in that continent.
- Although there will be international, regional and global meetings, these are very expensive and not exactly the best contribution the programme can make to combating global warming. Because of that, it will be very important to develop creative and appropriate communication systems, based on the accessibility and availability of modern digital communication technology.

Plenary and Discussion

Question: Are there tools for sharing and learning in the network, other than the website? What kind of interface is there between smallholder farmers and members?

Response: Meetings are being held with website designers to develop a suitable webpage that would adapt to the needs of our members, including issues of language, culture, and personal preferences. The website should reflect the needs of our diverse membership. All the same, factoring in the concerns of smallholder farmers might be challenging.

Comment: If one is working with another network that is linked to the community level, one can use this connection or relationship to link with the policy level. In this vein, we can learn from the experiences of the Open Knowledge Network (One World International). The model involved three regions and peer networking.

Comment: The work needs to be done at the local level but also at other levels (regional, national and international).

Question: What are we expected to do as we wait for the April 2010 meeting that is due to set the agenda?

Response: Members can embark on the process of identifying regional representatives, a task that should begin immediately.

Comment: If we follow in the footsteps of governments we will definitely lose our way.

Question: How is the concept of small-scale producers linked to the policy level and how will they be linked to the policy makers (make provision for input into the policy level)?

Response: Issues of policy are critical to the network. Small-scale producers ought to be the core focus in policy discourse. We need to know and articulate what they are saying.

Comment: If we are going to get involved in this, we need to be convinced that this is something that needs to be done.

Comment: From the point of view of someone involved in business, this is an important challenge. It obliges us to reflect further and to know what it involves. We need to think what we need to do about it.

Comment: Lobbying needs to be done with policy makers in every country and at every level. We need to come up with ideas to define policy issues from a rights-based perspective. The day will come when policy makers see small-scale producers as a strong sector that determines state policies (this is more relevant to Africa than to Bolivia). The programme should involve policy makers so that they can participate and express their points of view.

Question: In arriving at the core team of 15 representatives, will we involve all countries or are there pre-selected countries?

Response: Geography is not the basis for the nomination of the regional representatives. Instead, the basis for nomination is whether the nominees can articulate specific issues of concern. The network members will represent specific areas, not countries.

Question: What are the experiences of the five representatives in Latin America?

Response: Setting up meetings in the different areas has been difficult. We have begun identifying the issues that we will present at the April 2010 meeting.

Question: How should we understand the term smallholder? After all, the term need not apply to a small-scale farmer, need it? Is the time frame adequate to pursue the objectives of the programme satisfactorily?

Response: Admittedly, rural livelihoods involve more than just agriculture. Nonetheless, we should come up with an agenda that embraces all aspects of rural economic activity. In Latin

America, goods produced locally have been branded culturally to add value to them (Chile, Bolivia, and Peru).

The time line is indeed short. The process of setting up a knowledge network is time-consuming, especially in building social capital. If we are productive and successful in our endeavour, the programme can survive beyond 2011.

Question: How will the small-scale producer benefit from the learning network? How do we contextualize the issues to fit the needs of small-scale producers so that they will be able to learn and implement such learning? We ought to address issues of sustainability of the programme, given its demanding objectives.

Response: We can make use of films, videos, documentaries and photos to convey messages to them, complete with analysis or commentary. In this regard, we should be innovative. Indeed, smallholders themselves can participate in gathering and disseminating information across regions.

Regarding the terms of reference for the people in Latin America, we will isolate issues and define objectives collaboratively. The same process should take place in Africa and Asia. The terms of reference are, however, open to change or review. It will be helpful to find an institution to coordinate the activities of regional organisations.

The issue of sustainability is important. The project cycle is slated to end in December 2011. Nevertheless, if performance is satisfactory, the programme can outlive this deadline and attract additional funding. Better still, we can advocate for this programme to be part of national policies.

Comment on the Link between Global Initiatives and Local Actors including Farmers and NGOs – report back from a workshop in Fort Portal, Uganda, on November 23, By: Bihunirwa Medius – KRC Uganda

The issue: How can the global learning network connect with and benefit small-scale producers at the local level?

The workshop in Fort Portal heard how small-scale producers, government and civil society faced with changing context in policies, markets and the like, that are associated with globalisation. These producers need agency and information to cope with these changes, to position themselves to survive/thrive. If the learning network has roots in regional processes – such as KRC in western Uganda, it can integrate local issues into its work in the build up to the April school.

Knowledge transfers, based on peer learning, can be instructive. However, such learning needs to be contextualized (not just in regions, but also in countries). There is a need to encourage local initiatives to discuss issues of concern to small producers and to look at

which tools work best in community settings – websites only work well down to a certain level.

Most of the problems facing small-scale producers are local. Only 20 per cent of these problems are global issues. The global Knowledge Programme focuses on the latter kind of issues.

Plenary Discussion

The issue: How might one make learning networks effective?

Comments

- What looks like a local issue – such as the problem of land ownership and management in S Africa – can be presented as a core global issue. In South Africa, 90 per cent of black farmers are struggling. We should seek to have the ruling model, set by commercial farming, reviewed. There are rich learning opportunities in Africa. We need to create space to facilitate such learning. In Uganda, only 14 per cent of small-scale farmers have rights to land, making their livelihoods precarious. Such farmers have little control over production, among other things.
- Right from the outset, the five African representatives need to be Pan-Africanists, that is, people who have a broader perspective. The deliberations of this programme give us perspective on the things we need to reflect on.
- As the South, we need to develop a common negotiating position, a workable agenda. We need to define what we will do and how we will work. The success of these programmes depends on members. The North and South need to understand each other's viewpoint and circumstances, appreciate different realities. Information technologies can help bridge some of these differences.
- We need to ensure that the knowledge percolates into the policy domain. Whatever knowledge we gather should be serviceable in policy advocacy/influencing/processing. Indeed, members of the network should view themselves as policy entrepreneurs.
- Policy advocacy can be problematic because policy makers work within bureaucratic structures. In pursuing such policy, we need to develop concepts and positions, grounded in the farmer's needs and concerns. Farmers need to speak with one powerful voice to lobby for governments to set up a conducive working environment. It would therefore be prudent to involve policy makers in the Knowledge Programme right from the outset as, integral members of the network. In being inclusive, we should seek to change the views of the people who think differently, including policy makers.
- There is a need to build trust among all cadres of our membership (and not just among farmers). Effort should be made to come up with practical solutions to policy dilemmas.

Besides, such learning should be relayed to the community. People of stature should be recruited into the programme.

- Partnership is crucial. We need to avoid duplication of effort and develop coherent messages. Some coordination is required.

6. Presentation on the Framework for a Knowledge Programme

By: Bill Vorley - IIED

Challenges and Risks

- Knowledge programmes run the risk of churning out knowledge that might be of little theoretical and pragmatic value.
- The focus of inquiry should be on global hot issues.
- Best practices are in the main highly context specific; as such, they are not generalisable.
- Need to discard outdated models of knowledge integration and filtering.
- How should the existing knowledge be packaged?
- Need to focus inquiry, and rigorous evidence-based research, on areas in which knowledge is scanty or even non-existent. Members should set such research priorities.

IIED has commissioned research that seeks to map the debate on small-scale producers and market globalisation, to flesh out the areas between the rights-based and market-based approach arguments. The proposal is to record on video the voices of stakeholders along the axes of the debate.

We need to:

- Organise seminars or debates during which issues involved in the foregoing controversy are addressed.
- Be strategic in thinking and anticipate issues, displaying conceptual abilities.
- Design an approach with which to articulate issues of the South.
- Consider how we can function in a network in which members may have strong ideological differences.
- Enable communities to connect with the learning network: five or six hubs that can be serviceable to this end.
- Figure out how to juxtapose our work with the activities of other institutions.

Time Table

- February 2010: there will be a meeting in Bangalore to put the last piece of the learning network in place, this time for Asia.
- Between January and March: core representatives will define priority questions for the LN Residential School in April. That will set the agenda for commissioning research to fill knowledge gaps, possibly involving learning network members.

- From May 2010 onwards, the virtual debate will continue. Need to decide on how our future work will look like as we go along. Perhaps we can elect to debate on the value of research we have commissioned and assess its significance.
- We have until the end of 2011 to find out whether we have a valid mechanism of generating knowledge

Plenary and Discussion

Comment: The Arid Land Information Network has community resource centres (Maarifa Centres) that are used in generating knowledge from communities. Each centre has a log, through which members are able to speak for themselves.

Private-public partnerships are vital in the generation and transmission of knowledge in communities. Revenue raised from PPP can run knowledge centres. The use of information technologies, e.g. IPods, is allowing the use of short video clips in local languages in disseminating information to farmers, for instance, about making manure.

Question: What is different or unique in our approach? What have we learnt from other models or interventions? What new ways of thinking are we employing? What kind of issues are we framing or designing?

Response: In April, the fifteen representatives will fashion the agenda and the issues. The Learning Network does not aim to generate data for the sake of it. Instead, the network seeks to isolate core common issues for policy influencing.

The network is unique because knowledge generation is being driven by stakes who are “globalisation takers” rather than “globalisation makers”. The kind of information that it gleans can be unique. It is designed to attract the participation of innovative individuals who have a common purpose.

Question: What products are we promoting and have we assessed their demand? We need to be clear on the demand of different consumers in different markets that have different standards or expectations. What can we do to provide linkage between producers in the South and consumers in the North?

Response: Being familiar with market trends is invaluable. But the focus of our work is not such micro aspects of marketing: this work is the focus of other specialised organisations.

Response: Our task is to provide a global picture of market trends. For instance, we can provide data on what fair trade will look like several years hence. We can also provide data on how large a niche market (organics) is likely to evolve.

Question: What strategic approach can we use as a network to maximize benefits for farmers? How can we ensure that we transform the lives of small-scale producers?

Response: We need to focus on value addition. Policy influencing is key in configuring the environment in which small-scale producers operate – better budgetary allocation to agriculture (including its sub-sectors), better infrastructure, and so on, can flow from policy reconfigurations.

Response: We seem to have disregarded the issue of supply. We are talking about small-scale producers exploiting international markets, yet these farmers live in countries that have serious food deficits. We need to target increased supply too.

Response: We should build on the knowledge that already exists and not attempt to reinvent the wheel. The effectiveness of this programme depends on the performance of the partners themselves. We need to think of innovative ways of disseminating whatever knowledge we produce. Regional authorities, such as the East African Community, the Southern African Development Community, should be the target of policy influencing.

Question: What can we do to engage policy makers and consumers in the North?

Response: We should think of creating markets here in the South. The creation of the common markets in East Africa promises to open markets for small producers. Favourable trade agreements can facilitate the entry of small traders to reach consumers in the North. The Knowledge Programme ought to look for ways to highlight these structural factors of trade flow and follow them up in the policy process.

Response: Need to develop local content in information for farmers. Simply using information technologies without doing so is futile.

Response: Consumers in the North need to hear the voices of smallholders in their natural setting.

Response: Smallholders have a duty to become familiar with standards for local and international markets to make informed decisions on which markets they can invest in.

Response: The Knowledge Programme should highlight areas in which market conditions are hindering millions of smallholders from accessing markets.

Comment: This programme should not try to promise to be everything to everybody. It's not possible for this programme to connect directly with millions of small-scale producers, but we should be careful to ensure that small producers' views are taken into account.

Question: How do we ensure that we achieve the learning we need? How do we identify the different issues we need to work on?

Response: The economic crisis offers an opportunity in terms of conceptualising the issues facing small producers. This is an important and valuable opportunity. We need to look for one or more common issues that are also different.

Response: The work is being done by marginalised groups or countries that are feeling the negative impacts of globalisation.

Question: The sustainability of this programme will depend on how valuable the network is for the people involved. What should the strategic approach be so that this can be taken forward and result in something useful for small producers?

Question: How focused are we with regard to this network? What strategies are going to be used? In Africa we have different regions and different types of organisation. We need to look at how we are going to link the work from these different regions and their relationship with how the network operates. How will work on policy processes be reported?

7. Presentation on outcomes from the Latin America Meetings and decisions on next steps for the LN in Africa

By: Diego Muñoz

Report on the meetings held in Lima and Managua on 5th and 10th August 2009. Countries represented are Peru, Colombia, Bolivia, Ecuador, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala.

Salient points from presentation:

- There are huge imbalances (in terms of markets and policies) between large and small producers.
- Several global challenges (climate change, food crisis) need policy responses (government action).
- Networks are not held in high esteem.
- Questions were raised about how the Knowledge Programme can be made effective (operational framework).
- Need to think locally and act globally. Much knowledge can be gleaned from the grassroots. The North ought not to have a monopoly on information.
- Need to appreciate that the goals and needs of countries, even those in the same region, can be different.
- Seek to operate in ways that are entirely dissimilar to the approach taken by other networks.

- Seek to build agency in the South that would allow for the generation and transmission of information.
- Need to have a sense of mission to expand the agenda to the region – develop “wider antennae”.
- Need to determine the orientation of research.
- Need to seek to build the capacity and power of people, institutions and organisations involved in the South.
- Look for ways to specialise in organics.
- Look at all rural development issues, not just agriculture.
- Think of how to manage and conserve energy.

Plenary and Discussion

Key Comments:

- For the Latin America group, the issue of climate change is timely in the context of the Copenhagen Climate Meeting.
- Carbon taxation can help raise revenue to support environmental conservation.
- To exploit the potential of organics in the North, there is a need to engage consumers there. Big producers control market chains and solely and arbitrarily determine standards, without consulting producers in the South.
- The South should package its case for organic foods to consumers in the North. It needs to make a cogent case of the cost advantages of organics. In this regard, we need to nurture more South-to-South cooperation.
- Need to take a sophisticated approach to the issue of rights- versus markets-based philosophies. In a way, even small-scale producers are capitalists in their own right. Networks should seek to gain insights from the private sector and indeed collaborate with this sector to address pertinent issues.
- The network needs to accept some realities. In the main, big producers provide most of the food consumed in the North. While organic may be gaining favour, the proportion of the market controlled by the South is negligible. This begs the question: what is the future of the small farmer?
- The issue of the market share of small producers in international markets is complex. Many large consumers actually source their produce from such producers.

- Let us look at markets in a broad sense, to include the local and regional markets, and not just the international markets. We need not feel insecure about market standards regarding food. We should be keen to set such standards at all levels. In Uganda, for instance, plans to codify such standards are at a mature stage.
- We need to support small producers to organise themselves into strong groups that control quality, have market intelligence, and can exploit export lines to niche markets.

8. Next Steps/Way Forward

By: Diego Muñoz

- Diego Muñoz will send participants the English version of the Latin America report (20 pages).
- In February 2010, a similar meeting will be held in India (Bangalore) for the Asia region. A report of the proceedings will subsequently be sent to members.
- Members should embark on the process of electing regional representatives.
- In April, the first general meeting of the whole network will take place. The fifteen network members will meet and determine the core issues or course of action.
- After the April meeting, members should feel free to share important issues and concerns via the network website.
- Network members will meet at the end of next year (2010) to receive reports of work done.

9. Closing Remarks

By: Morrison Rwakakamba – Uganda National Farmers Federation

- Chair was commended for able stewardship of the meeting; all presenters and participants were also acknowledged.
- Need to generate knowledge from smallholder producers on the ground and arrive at sustainable solutions.
- Need to be in contact with farmers and encourage sharing among countries.
- Honesty, openness, and commitment are vital to the survival of the programme.
- Need to have a strategic and pragmatic view of issues by engaging all stakeholders and considering all perspectives.

Appendix 1: Participant List

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Appendix 2: SACDEP's opinion on the selected themes of the Knowledge Programme

Theme	Focus Areas
<i>Theme 1: Rural Livelihoods and modalities of pro-smallholder interventions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A review of approaches and strategies of international organisations to develop sustainable market opportunities for smallholders is imperative. The policy brief should address the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reconciling rights-based and market-based models of rural livelihoods ✓ What trade measures support or hinder small-scale producers' access to markets
<i>Theme 2: Perspectives on the current state and future of smallholder farming</i>	<p>The policy brief should focus on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Technology for sustainable intensification of smallholder farming systems under constraints imposed by markets, climate change and water resource management ▪ The rural non-farm economy as a driver of change in agriculture
<i>Theme 3: Perspectives of smallholder agency and organisation</i>	<p>The policy brief should focus on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Address how the smallholder producer can participate in policy development and be able to fully present their case ▪ How the smallholder organisation can be fully informed and made aware of how to build business and market literacy within rural enterprise groups - tools and approaches
<i>Theme 4: Perspectives on market trends and opportunities for smallholders</i>	<p>The policy brief should focus on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ICT and smallholder markets; the hype and the reality of new models for information flow between smallholders and supply ▪ The importance of product development, design and packaging, and how smallholders can best develop resilient brands ▪ Access to market information for the smallholder, especially in the area of packaging and labelling
<i>Theme 5: Perspectives on the link between land rights, access to natural resources and access to markets</i>	<p>The policy brief should focus on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key legal levers for small scale investors to get a better deal in their negotiations with incoming investors ▪ Prospects for the protection of indigenous and farmer knowledge and genetic resources (seeds) in the face of market enclosure
<i>Theme 6: Perspectives on consumption and sustainability agenda</i>	<p>Many smallholders are not given a chance in formulation of standards and certification being demanded by the markets. Certification costs of sustainable transition practices are a big burden for the smallholder. Their voices are not heard in the setting of standards and priorities.</p> <p>The policy brief should focus on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Whether fair trade is the best way for consumers to express their solidarity with smallholder producers and small rural enterprises

Appendix 3: Fundamentals for success for a smallholder agency, by Uganda National Farmers Federation

Six fundamental principles that make a smallholder agency succeed in globalisation and market access:

1. How can we work with countries to resolve the paradox of growth without transformation?
2. How can the supply and demand of agricultural governance be balanced? There has been an over-supply of ideas and services to farmers but there has not been an investment in building the demand agency. How can famers therefore be organised to build their capacity and competencies to demand for what is theirs, i.e. in the economy and national budget? There is need to have stronger and independent farmer groups for smallholders to demand collectively and at the same time create necessary structures to deepen knowledge and information for the sake of farmers.
3. Democratic development planning model, i.e. how are farmer actors involved in policy making processes? There has been limited involvement in planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes that affect the smallholder.
4. Create conditions for peace, consolidate the peace dividend and invest in conflict resolution, prevention and disaster response. How can farmers be prevented from having a minority mentality and be able to change the regimes that are not favouring them?
5. How can we reclaim the ecological and legal integrity of the environment and natural resources?
6. How can we commit to gender equality?

Access to and sustainability of markets for smallholder farmers can be achieved through:

1. Improvement of railways and telecommunication services
2. Increased value addition in agriculture
3. Strengthening warehouse receipts systems
4. Increasing the capacity of farmers' organisations to build up skills in management, entrepreneurship and group dynamics
5. Building market information infrastructure
6. Improving community access roads and trunk roads

Appendix 4: Suggestion on Key Themes – Eastern Africa Farmers Federation

1. *Livelihoods of small producers:* Before engaging small producers, it is imperative to understand who they are.
2. There needs to be an enabling business environment that would benefit small producers.
3. *Emerging market opportunities:* Some of these opportunities include:
 - ✓ Public regulation (protectionism)
 - ✓ Climate change (carbon markets) – Can farmers actually benefit from these carbon markets?
 - ✓ Farmer agri-business linkages that would benefit the producers
 - ✓ Post conflict markets
4. Role of producer organisations – what can they do to strengthen the small producer?

Appendix 5: ALIN's notes on Guiding Themes

Guiding Themes

1. Perspectives on smallholder agency and organisation
2. Perspectives on market trends and opportunities for smallholders

The following are fundamentals in most emerging markets in East Africa:

1. Agriculture is the mainstay of these economies
2. Most smallholders operate individually and on a small scale
3. Most smallholders are cut out of the main markets and global debates due to unfair legislation and lack of appropriate tools to access market information
4. Technology can be applied to enhance information sharing and transaction management in smallholder supply chain environments
5. There is latent demand for information and knowledge on the agricultural market that is localized and relevant to the millions of farmers and agricultural stakeholders
6. Poor infrastructure through which to access markets and market information by smallholder producers
7. Available information has been lacking in value and relevance
8. ICT literacy is low, but market price awareness is high

Need to match the latent demand for relevant agricultural market information with the improved technology infrastructure platforms; this can ride on the rural electrification programmes that cover all trading centres and the increasing mobile phone subscriber base.

A recent World Bank report noted that mobile phones were the “single most powerful way to extend economic opportunities and key services to millions of people.”

Appendix 6: Key domestic and global challenges faced by Smallholders, by CUTS

1. Most of the products produced by small-scale farmers in East Africa are mainly subsistence. Quite a small number are engaged in the export sector – only 2% are engaged in export while the rest sell their produce locally.
2. Farmers in rural areas are unable to sell their produce beyond the local markets in their areas. Why is it they cannot sell to the cities?
3. The majority of small-scale farmers are unable to produce a surplus for sale to the markets. For the few who are able to sell their produce, the amount they receive is again spent on food. These farmers need to first be made food secure before engaging them to produce a surplus for sale to the markets.
4. Because of population increase, productive farm sizes are shrinking, therefore producing a surplus is becoming an issue.

Appendix 7: Key questions about small producers and markets, by Kenya Organic Agriculture Network

1. The problem is always markets. It is assumed that products automatically reach the market but in reality that does not happen. Producers may go to the market once or twice, but after that they no longer have any produce to sell.
2. Why are small producers unable to supply markets? That is an important question.
3. For Kenya, the most important market is Uganda. That is an issue that needs to be looked at carefully.
4. Age is another important issue. How old are the best farmers? Are they between 18 and 30? How can young people be encouraged to get involved in agriculture? Many are moving to the cities.
5. The concept of agribusiness needs to be broadened to attract and include young people.

Appendix 8: Key questions about small producers and markets, by the National Organic Agricultural Movement of Uganda (NOGAMU)

1. The global market generates competition because of its own rules of the game. The way things are at the moment, it's like a one-year-old baby being asked to compete with a 20-year-old in a hundred metre sprint.
2. To be able to enter export markets, the quality standards that have to be met are increasingly stringent and harsh. This is why it is more and more difficult for small producers to enter international markets.
3. By “tying” small producers to markets, international markets are seen as sacred and that is not right.
4. With regard to the concept of “agency,” it depends how small producers are positioned. Whether they can exercise agency or not depends on their levels of education and training, their possibility of doing business and whether their business is sustainable. This means we need to look at policy, production and other issues.
5. A good option would be to encourage small producers as a group to take up organic farming.

Appendix 9: Key reflections on small producers and markets, by Vuyo Mahlati

1. It is difficult to re-define the concept of small producers. What is a small producer at this moment in time and in the current context?
2. My idea of a small producer has to do with productivism. Productivism should be at the centre of the debate.
3. We need to move from aid to productivism. This should be strongly linked to the idea of equity and justice.
4. Both concepts should be based on sustainable development, as a goal to be achieved.
5. We also need to look very carefully at supply and demand issues, identifying which are the markets for the poor and for small producers.
6. We therefore need to review the concepts again and establish new analytical categories.

Appendix 10: Small Producer Agency in the Globalised Market, by OPPAZ

Introduction

Key issues that are holding back small-scale producers in Africa from experiencing sustainable development include poverty, food insecurity, poor organisational development, poor governance and scanty knowledge. These issues are mutually reinforcing and amplify one another if not checked.

Example: Scanty knowledge amplifies poverty, poor governance and poor organisational development. Similarly, poverty, poor governance and poor organisational development exacerbate poverty. Poor governance likewise has a negative effect on organisational development and food security. This relationship makes up a vicious cycle.

Question:

Can the identified measures defined in the six themes of the Knowledge Programme correct the situation?

Response:

Knowledge alone cannot improve the circumstances of small-scale producers. It needs to be coupled with practical alternatives in a holistic fashion. Small-scale farmers equipped with both knowledge and practical support are better placed to experience sustainable development than by just having one or the other.

Activities that would trigger development: A holistic approach encompassing all themes and extending beyond the themes would help assist the situation. Considerations would involve the following:

1. Avoidance of simplified human-defined barriers at the expense of complex natural interactions, e.g. use of agricultural extension workers to the exclusion of forest knowledge causes environmental destruction.
2. Underrating the capacity of local people to adapt to new knowledge and technologies in the guise of appropriate technology is in itself a form of perpetration of poverty. *Example:* Honey produced using commercial frame hives is of better quality but development workers are shy of promoting their use because small-scale farmers lack the capacity to handle them. Can they not learn if given a chance?
3. Development support should also include an aspect of aid for trade which should target increasing the value chain of agricultural commodities; farmers need to be encouraged to add value to their commodities. This would entail development providers establishing a network of operators in specific value chains for specific products, facilitation of market access, transport and cold storage, among other facilities.
4. Development should include capacity building in visionary leadership and organisational development.
5. Climate change must be given priority in all development work. Innovative technologies that reduce pressure on the environment for livelihoods and incomes should be identified and supported.

Conclusion

Development for small-scale farmers is a complex situation that requires complex solutions and the efforts of all. A mix of empowerment with non-tangible things (knowledge) and tangible alternatives could trigger the sustainable development of the African small-scale farmer.