



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



First Learning Network Meeting - Spring School -

Chateau de Bossey, Céligny, Geneva, Switzerland

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Learning Network – Spring School – Geneva, 26th – 29th April

In 2007 HIVOS launched a new initiative called the **Knowledge Programme (KP)**, aimed at sharing knowledge within the organisation and with its partners. 2008 saw the start of a new phase in which the programme was expanded. Pioneering institutions from the global South and North were invited to participate and work together on issues such as the inclusion of civil society in closed societies, civil society building and consolidation, pluralism promotion, sustainable economic development and freedom of expression.

The programme entitled “*small producer agency in the globalised market*” is part of this broader programme. It seeks to build bridges by setting up a knowledge network composed of individuals and groups, from the world of agriculture and food with a high capacity for criticism and analysis, including researchers, farmers and their organisations, private entrepreneurs from the agribusiness sector and others.

After a series of roundtables in Africa, Latin America and Asia intended to establish the network and flesh out ideas for the potential themes to be addressed, the first global learning network meeting was convened near Geneva.

The objectives of the meeting was as follows: allow members to familiarise themselves with each other; exchange views; define work of the programme and ways of working; develop thematic working groups and identify ways of working for the groups; define how the network will exchange information; how monitoring and evaluation should be taken forward and agreeing a communication strategy.

The meeting was conducted in English, though translators were present at all times to allow interaction in both English and Spanish.

Day One: the beginnings

The first day began with an internal meeting for only the learning network members (there was no presence from IIED or HIVOS, as their role in the network had not yet been fully discussed). The morning was convened by Diego Munoz, from Mainumby.

Each member of the learning network introduced themselves and explained their interest in the network. This included referring back to answers they had sent to Diego’s questions prior to the meeting. The intention of the introductions was to understand more about the contexts in which the network members work, their professional backgrounds and their opinions about small farmers’ agency in globalised markets.

Two members from the group were missing – Ronnie Natawidjaja from Indonesia and Ujjwal Pradhan from Indonesia. Medius Bihunirwa from Uganda was substituted by her colleague Muhamed Shariff, as she was due to give birth.

The diversity of the group was apparent – members’ professions ranged from consultant and business man to NGO, academia and research and working directly in the field with small farmers.

The broad groups of professions were listed and counted (with some people working in multiple roles). Nine people had worked in NGOs, six people had worked in consultancies, six people had worked in business, or were engaged with enterprises through NGOs, though few were business men directly. Six people had worked in advocacy roles and five people had worked as teachers, particularly in universities. Four people had been researchers, four people had been weekend farmers or worked very closely with small-scale producers, two people had worked for international agricultural research centres, two people have been involved in government, two people had been involved in microfinance and one person in finance.

Many felt the value of the learning network was its diversity – both professional and cultural. This diversity allowed each member to learn about issues and potential solutions in different parts of the world. Knowledge and experience can be shared. Diego highlighted the need for genuine mixing between regional groups, with the help of translation to break the language barrier.

Diego trusted that close contact between network members and small-scale farmers would be achieved through the network members and their contact with small farmers and other networks.

The role of the donor: Hivos and IIED and retaining independence

After the initial introductions, Diego started a discussion about the role of IIED and Hivos. He recognised the important roles of IIED and Hivos as donors and as initiators of the network but questioned to what extent the network is, and would be, truly 'southern' driven.

One member noted that it was important to have independence from the donors - ensuring that the members drive the agenda, rather than the agenda being driven from outside the network.

Though North and South relations had been discussed, one member in particular felt this dichotomy was too traditional and we should try and move away from using it. It would be important to understand to what extent IIED and Hivos are donors, but the North and South divide is not helpful. It was felt that it was necessary to develop some guidelines and ways of working for the network – what are the members' responsibilities? To what extent do members represent the network or themselves? There was general agreement that a code of conduct for working together or some set of guidelines for the network would be useful.

It was highlighted that IIED and Hivos also have a lot to add to the network in terms of their research work and their networks. They can be regarded as integral partners rather than merely donors. In addition both IIED, Hivos and the network have the same agenda, poverty alleviation for small farmers, this means there is shared interest.

Being clear on roles and responsibilities

It was felt that it was necessary to be clear on the objectives of the network and the roles and responsibilities – how is the network going to operate, what sort of resources are available, who takes the responsibility for co-ordinating the network?

Concerns were raised over the financial resources to keep the network going. One member felt it would be necessary to have an incentive structure in place to keep people on board. One member felt it was important to take things slowly, get to know each other fully and to think locally in order to act globally.

Stay focussed and prioritise

Members generally agreed that it was necessary to always keep the main focus of the network in mind – that of benefiting small-scale farmers. It would be important to prioritise issues and not spread the work of the network too thinly.

Research on current policy and influencing policy that affects small-scale farmers was seen as something valuable the network might be able to do. A solid research base was also regarded as important in order to maintain legitimacy and move beyond anecdote. Sharing lessons and issues from the diverse geographical areas was also seen as vital. The local issues in these particular geographies can be fleshed out to create a global picture of the issues facing smallholders.

One member mentioned the need for very practical publications that were easy to read and digestible and informed the world about the key issues facing smallholders. Several members mentioned the need also for 'success stories' that identified examples of the successful inclusion of smallholders by large businesses.

Value added?

Some discussion surrounded what the 'value add' of the network should be. One member explained that it was necessary for the network to achieve something that the members alone could not achieve. Ambitious work should be the aim of the network – even impacting something as challenging as policy should not be beyond the aims of the network. Other members agreed that sharing knowledge alone will not be enough to have an impact. In order to have an impact and maintain legitimacy, ambitious targets are required.

Separating the “what” and the “how”

Many group members felt it was too difficult to discuss the “how” of the network, without knowing the “what”. In this sense some members felt this discussion would be more helpful to have at the end.

In terms of the what, missing member Ronnie was asked to highlight the key issues he felt smallholders face and areas that the network might want to consider. He mentioned as key issues (a) the management of small-scale producers within a committed group (to overcome reluctance of business to work with small-scale farmers), as well as (b) investment to overcome the lack of capital in small-scale production to invest in improved production. Ronnie also felt it was vital to share knowledge between the different regions.

Quality

The work of the network needs to be of a high quality. There need to be appropriate checks in place to ensure this happens and it was felt that the network should not stop at raising an issue, but take it further. There needs to be a clear set of objectives on communicating the networks' work, methodology and a timetable or work plan.

Afternoon session: prioritising research gaps

The afternoon session and the rest of the workshop was facilitated by external moderator Rhiannon Pyburn. She briefly introduced herself and her professional background.

The aim of the afternoon session (as well as the rest of the week) was to help identify global priorities for the network. The potential points of discussion surrounding the priorities was introduced by Rhiannon as the following: the number issues the group wants to work with; why these issues cannot be addressed conventionally; how the group itself should function. The importance of including missing members was seen as vital.

The **role of IIED and Hivos** was highlighted again. Rhiannon presented it as the following:

- Provoking debate
- Both have partners who work on these issues so the network can make use of these.
- Open to the process designed by members.
- Drafting criteria – boundaries of playing field. Can be re-drafted if not in agreement.
- Don't have veto rights.
- Here for support.

The floor was then asked to discuss any issues or questions they may have. Some members were concerned over the use of an external moderator and felt they had been badly informed about the use of a moderator. They felt this now meant that the group members themselves were not driving the process. Diego tried to alleviate concerns by explaining that the role of the moderator was to facilitate, not to govern. Other members felt it was vital that the session was moderated.

Debate ensued about the summer school programme itself. Diego mentioned that the first two days were to stir up debate and the second to put ideas down on paper. Some members felt this was insufficient time for discussion and that less should be put aside to shaking up debate and ideas – the members are already fully aware of the issues. It was agreed that the programme could be reconsidered.

The issues

Rhiannon summarised what she understood to be the key issues as identified by the answers the network members had already submitted before the meeting. She conveyed them as 9 key dilemmas, which could be adapted as the network saw fit. They were as follows:

1) *Establishing a countervailing force*

A force against information asymmetries; excluded market access for small products; a lack of bargaining power; inadequate knowledge availability; marginalization and exploitation. There is a need for agency and empowerment.

2) *International and national policies*

Ensuring that policies are producer friendly. Ensuring that policies don't have perverse effects on smallholders e.g. subsidies, land policies, land grabs, lack of knowledge about small producers.

3) *Engaging in markets in new ways*

4) *Institutions to support smallholders*

5) *Dealing with financial aspects*

6) *Engaging with societal phenomena – gender/young people leaving*

7) *Technical aspects – innovation and technical service delivery*

8) *Breaking myths about smallholders*

9) *Other – climate change, infrastructure*

Potential criteria by which the issues could be prioritised were also put forward by Rhiannon. These included:

- **5 future orientated** dilemmas or thematic issues facing smallholders in the next 10-30 years.
- Issues that **cannot be addressed locally or within one sector** – interregional groups/issues.
- **Innovative**: priorities that this learning network can really help with.
- Issues where there is a **lack of primary knowledge** or **lack of knowledge in the right hands**.
- Where there is a **mix of research, outreach, lobbying, communication** priorities.
- Clearly identified **users/processes** for the output.

The members were asked whether the issues and priorities identified were the right ones.

One member felt that **risk** also needed to be a key issue that was addressed by the network. They also felt that it would be useful to have three key levels of analysis at the back of everyone's minds – these determine the ability of farmers to have agency. For example at the macro level or at the governmental level farmers do not have the power to effect change. These are external factors that agency itself may not be able to address. The second level is the national or local market and the third level are those issues where small farmers may be able to be agents of their own development (though this is currently dealt with by NGOs). There was agreement that there are issues that operate at different levels and these need to be borne in mind.

The members divided into three groups to try and begin to prioritise the issues.

Prioritising issues: results from the two groups

Group One considered the nine 'dilemmas' but decided these were too many to handle. However, they agreed that **national and international policy** should be one key issue for the network to address. The group felt policy met the six criteria (outlined above) very well and explained that it should focus very clearly on the small farmer not "just what happens high

above". It proposed addressing policy at the local, national and international level and also private policy. The aim would be to be forward-looking, identifying policy that might work better for the future, rather than looking at what has not worked in the past.

The group stressed the importance of the policy work having relevance for the local level. It was also highlighted that the **implementation of policy** is often as relevant as the policy itself – the implementation stage can be most problematic. It was stressed that the **policy-making process** itself was also vital – who owns the policy, who implements it, who integrates the relevant players and who audits the policy?

Group Two felt it was important to focus closely on the specific issues that smallholders face. Banking services, capacity building (particularly in regard to understanding markets and market risk and new challenges such as standards) were regarded as important. Plugging finance gaps was mentioned by several members of group two as vital.

Policies were also regarded as important by group 2, but the group also felt that local conditions were vital – farmers might be able to do more about local conditions than national or international policies (Alberto). They described their priority as **'farmer organisation'**.

Group Three also asked what the network might be able to achieve at the local level. They questioned what sorts of institutions are in place to support small farmers. Farmers need to be involved in developing supporting institutions or organisations so that their needs are properly addressed and self-defined. Diego identified that in one sense the discussion had gone beyond agency – it was also about ensuring that support given to smallholders is also defined by them, rather than work simply being done in smallholders' names. The group recognised the importance of participatory development and of putting farmers at centre stage. The group recognised their priority as **'institutions'** which affect smallholders' ability to build their agency

Discussion took place after the groups had presented their key priorities for the work of the network.

Members of the group recognised that the network needs to base itself on fact-based research rather than anecdotal evidence and that the value of the network should be achieving something that the individual members cannot achieve – this is why policy work could be relevant. A group of members has more weight with policy issues than the individual members alone. Some of the group however were sceptical about the value in trying to influence policy.

Before the session was closed, Bill reminded the group to keep 'globalised markets' in mind. This is the focus of the network and the network's ideas could be crystallised more fully around this. The speakers presenting the following day would perhaps assist in this.

The network felt that they had made good progress – as consensus had been reached on three key priority areas for the network.

Evening film presentation

After dinner, Ethel and members of the network from Latin America presented a short video. The video demonstrated some of the key issues facing smallholder farmers in Latin America, including analysis of a food security package implemented by the Nicaraguan government, the impact of the economic crisis on demand for export products in Guatemala, the role of producer organisation in raising product quality and solidarity in Peru, and the value of reviving cultural identity in Bolivia.

Additional contributions from Latin American participants following the video. Falguni reported how the Nicaraguan policy *Integral promotion of food and nutritional security* (PISA) had come in for almost universal criticism since it was introduced, but that 15,000 rural women were benefitting each year, reaching half of rural families, half of whom are living below

\$2/day poverty. Alberto reported that Guatemala produces 80% of the vegetables in Central America – a region that has become highly integrated. The video had described the economic “tsunami” that swept through the Guatemalan countryside following the financial crisis. Export production of non-traditional crops from 200,000 small-scale farmers in Guatemala is controlled by a small number of families. Transparency would allow better functioning of the chain and more just and equitable distribution of income. Claudia reported that the impact of the financial crisis in Bolivia, by contrast, had been small because they are hardly connected to global markets. There is a need to understand the changes in Bolivia and more widely in the region that is challenging the whole model of development, around food sovereignty, territorial, and cultural development, with women at the centre of the strategy. Lorenzo highlighted the importance of trust, organisational strength and managerial capacity in improving the position of small-scale producers, especially around quality of production.

One participant commented that this video should cause us to rethink the dilemmas identified on Day 1.

Day Two: Stirring up debate and field trip

The day’s discussion began with returning to the issues identified by the groups the previous day. Group three clarified that the group was less interested in institutions per se, but in how smallholders can be better supported. How they can be better linked to markets, to big business, to access credit and information. For this group, supporting smallholders was key, rather than the institutions per se.

It was felt that at that point in the discussion it was necessary to provide some more specific detail on the issues if the group agreed that these should be the priorities for the network.

Members agreed that policy work was something that the network could do – it would have to be different from existing policy work and would have to be tailored to smallholders – smallholders would need to remain the focus throughout, and engaged as participants rather than victims. It was also felt to be important to deal with the support systems needed (at the local level) to enhance smallholders’ agency. [voice. Fact-based research]

Diego reminded the group that it was necessary to bear in mind how the issues discussed by the groups would be linked. The research needs to be effectively linked so there is a clear research system, rather than simply clusters.

Presentations from guest speakers

The presentations from guest speakers were intended to provoke thought and debate that might help the network, by considering dilemmas that will be facing smallholders in the next 10-30 years.

Mark Halle, International Institute for Sustainable Development IISD, Geneva

Mark chose, after work in the field, to try and influence policy-making. He felt this was the level at which real change could be achieved. Economic policies such as trade and investment set the context in which we work. Unless we make those policies supportive or at least neutral, we will be “walking southwards on a northbound train”. Any changes at the policy level could simply sweep away any progress made at the local level. For example if trade policy is neutral for small farmers then local efforts might be successful. Though the network may be more interested in trading rather than trade policy, the former occurs within the context of the latter. Access to information, meeting norms and standards, access to finance, transparency – all of these issues are important but they occur within a policy context.

Who is creating policy? How do we know that they are being created in smallholders' interests? There is nothing about the liberalisation of markets that is inherently supportive of smallholders. The strongest advocates of liberalisation are the largest producers in the South. The role of governments is to protect their own interests. In terms of investment, policies are good at protecting the interests of investors and a bad at strengthening the responsibilities of investors. An example is the new [Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme](#) (GAFSP) provides massive investment for agriculture but is not friendly to smallholders and sustainable producers. Another example of how policy can shape the nature of investment is investment in land ("land grabs"), driven by a move from cheap access to assured access to resources. Complaints will not be heard locally but under international commercial law. Before we understand more about policy creation we need to understand what we want to achieve.

Mark believes government procurement policy is a key area where a difference can be made. He estimates that governments account for 23% of purchases worldwide, and up to 47% in some countries. If they could ensure that this was done with the values of sustainable development in mind, a real difference could be made. It would create a tipping point that affects the behaviour of others.

Mark firmly believes the global system is in crisis. The economic crisis gives us the opportunity to change the way things operate – it allows us to question the assumptions of globalisation on which the current model is built.

Julius Sen, London School of Economics.

The aim of Julius' presentation was to explore 'how global markets are behaving'.

He started with an example of a challenge LSE gives its students. The school gives them a small plot of land, tells them they are in deep debt and three of their family members are very ill. The challenge is to make a profit. Julius explains that no student has achieved this to date.

Julius explained that current global economic model is leaving out the whole small farm sector, and that policy makers will not show real interest in a sector "that cannot be rescued". Business has no interest in investing in small farmers and the areas of world in which they operate. Julius argues that businesses are currently disengaging from global markets and retracting their supply chains closer to home. This is due to increasing transport and security costs. This overlaps with the green agenda, or seasonal eating and "food miles". Julius believes governments are accelerating this trend because of the global financial crisis – integration is seen as increasingly risky.

Julius believes that this trend may have a silver lining. Producers have traditionally thought that they need to produce for exacting northern markets that necessitate the jumping of numerous barriers. Now smallholders can focus on national and local markets and the false hope of export markets (which were actually only niche) avoided.

In response to de-globalisation, Julius believes creative new protectionist ("promotionist") policies are required and that these need to be tailored to each market. He believes that we should detach ourselves from the false dawn of a "globally integrated smallholder system" – local should be the focus.

Julius explains that even where trade policy is seemingly open, other measures can be employed to prevent fair competition. He noted health and safety checks on food and standards as an example of a barrier to fair competition and trade.

Local solutions and national "promotionist" policy is the place to intervene, eg competition policy and the structure of the market Julius emphasises the importance of stability, for example pricing stability, for the world and small farmers.

Questions and comments

Two other presenters and network members questioned the degree to which disengagement was actually happening and felt that in certain parts of the global system, integration was here

to stay. They mentioned the financial system as an example. Also the example of regional trade agreements, such as the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa which links together 140 million people. Agricultural banks will withdraw from smallholder lending – which is seen to be high risk, and will concentrate on commodity markets and the industrial sector.

Mark from IISD questioned the prevailing paradigm – he argued that protectionism can be positive, though some protectionist measures are unwelcome. Trade policy needs to be closely re-assessed and people need to be put back at the heart of it, to reflect on what should be liberalised and what not, maintaining policy space for national development.

One member observed that in reality it is not possible to stop trade agreements eg between Indonesia and China, that – in this example – had made Chinese peanuts much cheaper than Indonesian ones, so that Indonesia must focus on crops in which it is competitive. A counter argument was that if Indonesia's policy objective is to protect small-scale producers, it should acknowledge that it will never be able to compete with industrial-scale production and will need a sophisticated government system, rather than policies to support land consolidation and international competition. One network member noted that in the discourse of “non-viability” of smallholders, we forget that most global production is by small-scale producers. Trade and agricultural policies are not defined by governments but by large businesses. Large business penetrates even the most isolated communities. Another member was concerned that trying to influence policy is an impossible task and something we have been trying, unsuccessfully, to change for many years.

Another member saw the issue not so much as “withdrawing” from smallholders and developing countries, but as countries being uncompetitive due to very high “last mile” costs. There is a lot of lip service from governments about smallholders, but in reality a lot of policy decisions are based around articulate sectors such as the service industry. The question is, who is representing the interests of smallholders, in such a polarised debate?

Reflecting on the presentation of Julius Sen, a member commented that more inward orientation is required to redefine local and national capacities, and new forms of market participation.

Mark from IISD argued that we really need to consider closely what we mean by agriculture – the dominant WTO policies looks at agriculture from a point of view of industrial production of commodities for trade. In reality agriculture has much more value than this alone. For example, agriculture has biocultural value, it has social value in the maintenance of rural livelihoods. The big failure of trade policy – as a hangover from the GATT – is to see the big stakes as commercial interests. The WTO reached behind national borders to influence domestic policies, but domestic policy has a much wider set of interests than simply commercial. The WTO juggernaut has ground to a halt since 2001. We need to take a wider vision of trade, and the Bolivia experiment is very significant in the search for a new model in which the future for small-scale producers matters. Trade is about development as much as it is about agricultural commodities.

Sietze Vellema, Wageningen University.

Sietze took on the subject of farmer agency as the starting point for the network. Discussing trade policy diverts us away from more meaningful discussions about points of intervention. Sietze argued that trade policy has not been a problem since 2001, and that the real relationship is between firms and suppliers. Where and how can we actually intervene in terms of agency?

Sietze used a “triple P” framework to conceptualise farmers’ agency: **p**erformance, **p**roximity, and **p**rocedural justice.

Performance is about what farmers can actually do – the skills and techniques of production: what crop they grow and whether it provides grounds to negotiate with a firm, how they work as a team, what skills they have, how they have adapted to local agroecological conditions,

how they have worked with soils, pests, fertility; how they can make their skills indispensable to a company who is looking for suppliers.

Proximity is about organizing the functions of production and marketing close to producers, as this is extremely hard to do at a distance. The capacity of farmers to build viable institutional arrangements is a vital element. Can produce be collected and bulked? In what ways can farmers organise? How can farmers obtain capital, how can produce be stored and how can trade be transacted? Sietze explained how traders have an important role to play in this regard. They can help with bulking, credit, and payment transactions. This can be a practical entry point for farmers.

Procedural justice is about how farmers can then negotiate and influence policy -- such as regulation of terms for negotiation between economic agents -- through their networks, through organisation, through influencing local government.

Peter Utting, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD)

Peter's presentation stated that though neo-liberalism is very resilient, certain adjustments will now have to be made in light of the recent crisis. He believes that states will now play a key role in development and in making social compromises.

The trajectory of globalisation is dependent on the interplay between "alter-globalisation" and "developmental states". Peter believes that a form of "embedded liberalism" will emerge – that is where neo-liberalism and the role of the states combine to form hybrid models. Though neo-liberalism will still be the dominant paradigm, states will play more of a role. Peter mentioned Nicaragua as an example of this hybrid model. This means the current macro-economic model is not called into question. The current model of free trade as well as the distribution of value in global value chains, financialisation and speculation, will remain. However, Peter also explained that embedded liberalism may see increased support for small farmers, greater social dialogue and good governance, increased social policy and corporate social responsibility (CSR).

He believes the dominant political model will be one of consultation rather than contestation, and collaboration not contestation. Social policy will be ameliorative rather than transformative.

Peter argued that CSR is growing and that it has a broadening agenda. Companies are becoming more responsive, dealing with social, environmental and human rights. Business has now been recognised as an agent of inclusive development, for example through the use of new business models. CSR is also making an impact through the powerful coalitions it has been building (between business, IGOs, NGOs and government) and the creation and implementation of standards and other multistakeholder initiatives. However there is a limit to the CSR agenda – the total number of companies on board are just a fraction of the total – as exemplified by mechanisms such as the UN Global compact. In addition, many blind spots exist in the CSR agenda, for example, casualisation of labour further down supply chains. CSR will not change the prevailing paradigm of neoliberalism.

Peter believes the future will see a rise of the 'Corporate Accountability Movement' (CAM), which will see a move away from ad-hoc initiatives and more focus on linking CSR to public policy, mandatory regulation and mechanisms for redress. Peter explains that the CAM movement is politically weak and that the key challenge for the future is to rebuild coalitions between NGOs and social movements, NGOs and trade union, CSOs and progressive political parties and Northern and southern civil society organizations and networks.

General discussion around the presentations then took place:

One member challenged the statement that trade policy was no longer relevant. Trade liberalisation has lost Nicaraguan farmers \$300m worth of local market, due to imports. Costa Rica defended their political space to negotiate on behalf of their smallholders, negotiating multiple clauses into the CAFTA agreement.

Sietze asked whether there was anything the network could do at the local level to enhance economic activity e.g. aggregating produce. Is there anything we can do to enhance farmers' agency at the local and immediate level? Are there any case-studies involving successful mechanisms that we can use elsewhere? Sietze also wondered whether more could be done in terms of linking small-scale farmers selling second grade quality to markets.

The discussion then moved onto the subject of standards (sustainability and food safety standards) and how differing standards play different roles in promoting farmer agency. Peter argued that standards can be a blind spot in development – they can transfer risk and costs onto producers. How can these be made more equitable and how can the power relations within these initiatives be challenged? Peter believes that the John Ruggie approach of connecting businesses and human rights will be an interesting trend to watch. Grievance and redress mechanisms have the potential to be powerful.

In response to a question about contract farming, Sietze noted the choice within contracts between skilling (which can create agency) and deskilling.

A member from Latin America pointed to the changes in the debate on small-scale producers post the food crisis and after the World Bank WDR2008. She highlighted the importance of understanding the assets of the poor, not their weakness. A territorial rather than value chain can focus investments in identity and citizenship. She also highlighted the reduction in importance of international cooperation in Latin America, the reduction in importance of NGOs and emergence of roles of local governments, producer organisations, and indigenous peoples organisations.

Peter agreed that the golden age of NGOs is over, with more realism about what they can and cannot do. International agencies are retuning to agriculture in their discourse, with FAO and IFAD giving strong focus to smallholder agriculture. The key issue is what to do about youth in rural areas.

One member asked for insights on working more effectively at the international level. Peter suggested working with agencies that are already showing an interest in working with small farmers such as IFAD and FAO. Sietze felt it was important to come with successful examples of working with small-scale farmers – mechanisms that have been leveraged to have a positive impact on a large number of farmers. Peter also felt it was useful to find spaces within other organisations and networks that are conducive to smallholder agenda and encourage them to help further the network's agenda. He mentioned Via Campesina and ILO as examples. Julius, on the other hand felt that the members should concentrate on national organisations rather than international. He felt it was too hard to articulate a comprehensive agenda on smallholders at the international level. Mark believes that "multilateral policy making begins at home" and it is vital to focus on the process of policy making at the national level, to highlight how transparent and participatory the process is. He also explained that it is important to highlight positive examples of policy-making as well as the negative. Watchdogs are also useful to work with.

One member felt it was vital to think strategically about the work the network would do. Could the network add value by becoming a body that could talk on behalf of smallholders at the policy level and build smallholders' capacity to influence policy?

Another member felt it would be difficult to work at this policy level because there are "many hidden agendas" within multilateral agreements. He felt it was necessary for the network to balance work on the macro and formal issues and "real and precise aspects in favour of small farmers". Other participants stressed the need for the network to take account of what other networks are already doing, and that to be effective the network must prioritise cross-cutting issues that impact on income.

Afternoon: visit to cheese-making cooperative in French Jura and ripening centre Les Rousses, and presentation of Sophia Murphy's paper.

The afternoon involved a field trip to a cheese-making plant *La fromagerie des Moussières* in the French Jura. After the tour of the cheese-making plant and ripening centre Les Rousses, and discussion of how the cooperative had developed market power, Sophia Murphy presented her paper "Changing Perspectives: Small-scale farmers, markets and globalization" which was commissioned for the meeting. Members were asked to provide comments on the presentation and the paper.

One member explained that what really struck him from the paper was how to create farmer agency – he felt that farmer organisation had to be a key part of this to ensure that smallholders benefit from global value chains. If farmers are not organised, then the exporter will make all the decisions. Producer knowledge on market structure puts farmers in a stronger negotiating position to unlock value. He questioned the sustainability of farmer organisations, however, as he has witnessed some groups being formed by the exporter, who lack agency and break-up as soon as the exporter leaves. Organisation with empowerment means that when exporters leave, producers can find another market. Another member argued that the network's question needs to be reframed, as "What form of smallholder agency is needed in a globalised market" to eg improve contracts, generate information, define support systems and influence policy.

Two members thanked Sophia for the real value they saw in her research. One member explained how the document was passionate and allowed him to think small-scale farmers have a future. He suggested that successful examples of markets working with small-scale farmers could be added to the document. Lessons can be learnt from both success and failures.

Another member explained that several shifts have occurred at the end of 2008 that should shape the network's work. These include the financial crisis, the rising costs of oil (and subsequent price rises for fertilisers) and changing patterns of consumption. Small-scale producers did not see this coming and kept investing until the financial system crashed. He asked whether there was anything the network could do to alert farmers to these shifts and changes?

Day Three: deciding on 'issues' developing agenda for future work

The plan for day three was to decide on the issues the network would work with over the next 18 months. In addition the role of IIED and Hivos would be discussed in more detail.

Diego began the day by outlining the purpose of the day and explained that he hoped the network would be owned by everyone – including IIED and Hivos.

Diego moved on to summarise progress by the network so far. He emphasised the powerful nature of the network and its 16 members and the diversity of the network in terms of culture and professional background. He emphasised the importance of keeping small-scale farmers at the heart of the network's work and the subject of agency and to recognise how the three issues the network have selected are interconnected. He emphasised agency as "the way that small producers can take their own decisions in order to improve their lives and with the correct information, scenarios and inputs from the surrounding world."

He summarised the focus of the groups as follows: **group one** was focussed on **policy** (both national and international); **group two** on **farmer organisations**; and **group three** on establishing support systems or **supporting institutions for small-scale farmers**.

Some members responded that they felt groups two and three were dealing with very similar issues and that the network needed to be conscious of wording.

Discussion ensued as to the conceptualisation of these issues. One member conceptualised the three groups in the following way – smallholders and globalisation; smallholder producers in the market; smallholder producers and agency. Another member questioned the precise focus of group one's policy work – does the network want to create the right policy environment or learn about the right policy environment? He felt the former would be a long, hard task, but that learning should be the focus – learning about the how. Two other members reiterated the importance of identifying the gaps in current work and using the network to fill those gaps and do something that other networks have not done. The network felt it was necessary to identify outputs needed and to explain how this particular work would be filling an existing gap. The network decided that in order to make further progress it was necessary to break into groups and discuss the issues in more depth.

There was agreement that it was key not to repeat work that had already been conducted, rather to accelerate the rate of work they could do based on their formation as a group. Each group needed to identify why their particular area of work would add value to what had already been achieved in terms of market access and empowering small-scale farmers in globalised markets and where necessary informed to take necessary defensive measures.

It was mentioned that a fourth group might be valuable in order to discuss learning about the network itself and to be cross-cutting.

Agree how our own networks will feed in. A research coordinator for each theme. Sharp clear-cut ideas.

Ethel reminded the group to try and explore issues that will arise in 10 to 30 years time, to focus on gaps in existing work and to come out of the four day meeting with a clear workplan. There also needs to be system of quality control or project management, which could be conducted by the 4th group.

One member suggested merging groups two and three into one group as they dealt with very similar issues.

The members then decided which groups to join and they divided as follows:

Group one. Enabling policies: Luis, Claudia, Trilochan, Morrison, Ethel, Falguni, Josine, Sanjeev (not present), Mainza, Liz.

Group two. Strengthening producers and supporting institutions: Alberto, Lorenzo, Srikanth, Cecelia, Bill, Maggie, Henry, Bishwadeep, Ronnie (not present).

The groups then spent the afternoon discussing their issues of choice, how they would go about working on these issues and outlining a work plan.

Presenting the issues to the whole network

Diego asked the groups to consider the following of the other group's work - Am I convinced? Is it smallholder orientated? Is it realistic? Is it innovative and is it possible?

Group One explained how they propose to explore policy – specifically related to small farmers agency in globalised markets. There would be two key steps to their research: 1) policy analysis and 2) analysis of the dynamics of policy-making.

The work would take the following form:

1) Policy analysis:

- Policies (e.g. investment, cooperatives, taxation, public procurement and incentives)
- Analytical framework for policy analysis developed
- Analysis of current policy status
- Best model policy

- A diversity of products produced (i.e. documentation)

2) Dynamics of policy making:

- Analysis of state of art of policy-making (mapping & evolution)
- Policy making dynamics (players, motivations, etc)
- Best practice model (influence by small holders in the policy-making process)
- A diversity of products produced (documentation)

Policy-making analysis explores who sets the policy agenda, how are policies set, what their motivations are, how are policies implemented, and what the role of farmers' organisations in policy making is?

The key outputs will be an analytical framework – a framework that helps develop policies that are positive for small-scale farmers, current policy analysis and the development of best policy model (into which the first two will feed). The group undertook a value-added ranking for each of the core work areas and a timetable. They also roughly outlined which actors would be doing what and mentioned using network reviewers and peer reviewers for quality control.

After Group One's presentation the floor was opened for discussion:

One member questioned in what way the work would be filling gaps. The group replied by saying that there are big gaps in learning about policies and best practices in different parts of the world. The network can bring this learning together, though they recognised that many of the gaps would become clear whilst the work was being carried out. One member explained that a clear gap was a gap between the policies that are in place and policies that actually benefit small farmers. Most people in policy analysis are detached from the grass roots. Policies are also fragmented and lack co-ordination. By looking at these policies through the lens of the small farmer, it becomes possible to look at the whole policy environment i.e. across policy types. This can answer the question of are policies helping small farmers and are there positive examples that can provide lessons for elsewhere? The group emphasised that this is not an inventory of policies; it is an analytical framework – a clean method to look at policies (especially at the national and sub national level) to see what is working and what is hurting.

One member felt that the policy work was simply at too high a level to bring about change any time soon and that small-scale farmers could not wait 15 years for changes to take place.

Group Two worked on producer organisations. Their work aimed to explore what can be done to level the playing field in which small producers and their organisations operate, so that they have the information to better respond and act more quickly to future risks.

Group Two aimed to understand the risk factors that can affect small producers, how capacity can be built for farmers to better understand problems in the market and how to react to them. They were also interested in enhancing small farmer agency so they can understand early warning signs and mitigate risks. Access to information will form a vital part of this.

Group Two's proposed work to explore what current alert systems (for risk) already exist, the mechanisms small producers use to synthesise information and prepare themselves for risks and identify areas that need to be developed in order for farmers to use information for their benefit. Information might exist, for example, but the group wants to understand why farmers are not using that information. In this sense it is capacity building for the use of information.

The group did not have a detailed timeline, as it was a work in progress.

After Group Two's presentation the floor was opened for discussion:

Some members raised concerns that the idea that farmers are excluded from information is outdated. Simply giving information would not be enough, the ability to process this information is key. Group 2 was asked to clarify what sort of information – just markets or

other warnings such as climate? Is it local or regional markets? Is it information *per se* that is in short supply, or the reflexive capacity of producers to respond to information? One member explained that the aim was to create something very practical that farmers can use. If academics and ministries have been working on it for so long, why has none of it trickled down to the small farmer? How can farmers pre-empt market trends – this is the useful information, but how can it reach the farmer quickly?

One member warned that his group (Group Two) needed to be careful about going down the route of producing an early warning system for farmers. The focus should be on how farmers are building the agency to make better use of existing information, and ensure they are not “the last to know” and move further up the information chain.

The example of coffee in Peru is that market information is totally distorted and not available to cooperatives. One member saw the need as building capacity to handle market information equivalent to the business world.

One member raised concerns that providing information is not enough, the actions are important. If we just try to inform people about risk without telling them what to prevent risk, then people get frustrated.

Another member mentioned the importance of sustainable farmer organisations. How can we ensure that groups are not dependent on one charismatic leader or undermined because they are seen as a political threat? This has been the case in Uganda, for example.

Diego concluded the day by summarising how diverse the groups were, but stressed the importance of agreeing on issues as a whole network, so everyone can contribute. He explained how some issues will be old for some, but new for others and that he hoped this would not frustrate some members.

Day Four: communications, monitoring and evaluation and finalising issues and work plan.

The purpose of the day was to discuss the role of IIED and Hivos in more depth and to discuss the supporting functions for the network, such as Monitoring and Evaluation and communications.

Diego summarised what had been achieved to date. He felt that great progress had been made; particularly as for many people this was the first time they had worked with people from other continents. Diego felt Group One had made good progress but needed to refine who would be doing what and the finer details of the work plan. He felt Group Two had proposed something very specific and had worked well on the detail and in developing something practical, but needed to explore in more depth how their work would link to existing knowledge. How can they link to universities and academic institutions in their country and how can they map the problem in terms of the global debate on the issue? Diego raised concern that the groups might still be too large.

One member mentioned the importance of building on existing knowledge (such as research from IIED) and expertise within the group (such as some of the members' policy experience). The members felt it was essential to have more time in the final day to finalise issues and work plans. Diego reassured the group that the afternoon would be allocated for this.

Building consensus on the role of IIED and Hivos in the network

The network moved on to discuss the role of IIED and Hivos in the network. Diego explained the origins of the network: Hivos had decided to build the network and contacted IIED for their help. Prospective network partners were then contacted. In this sense the network did not originate from the ground up. Diego mentioned one of the issues raised regularly so far was the 'North' and 'South' divide. Diego felt this was an unhelpful set of labels and requested that it be dropped. He recognised that everyone should be seen as partners. This view was supported by another member who also felt that the North vs South label was outmoded.

Diego recognised that IIED and Hivos have made important contributions to the group and that they have invested a lot in establishing and organising the network and ensuring it functions. IIED and Hivos have, in this sense, committed themselves to a difficult task. But on the other hand, it was vital that the network is owned by its members and Diego believes the network is owned by all of its members.

Diego argued it is necessary to be very open about the role of IIED and Hivos and to understand that this is not a traditional donor-beneficiary relationship. In this sense the relationship is a learning process and the group should acknowledge and be open to this.

Diego asked anyone who had comments or concerns about the role of IIED and Hivos to raise those.

Two members of the group asked IIED and Hivos to speak up about their thoughts, motivations and drivers when they planned this network. Another member added that he felt it was important that everyone was on an equal footing and it was requested that IIED and Hivos give their opinions on the issues the groups have identified.

Bill explained that he very much wanted the network to work in a different way to traditional partner-donor relationships, which he felt are often quite "extractive". Research institutes normally bring together work from partners "to the centre" and undertake the integrated analysis themselves. In the case of this network, he saw members as leading the integrated analysis. Bill sees the issue of smallholders in globalised markets as an opportunity to do things differently. Bill described what he felt were the key drivers and questions IIED and Hivos had when they first thought of establishing the network. These included "how can small producers set their economic development in the face of a volatile environment?" How can

the development community, policy makers, producer organisations and businesses be supported to make better informed policy decisions? Can we start a process of globalisation of insight for a new kind of advocacy? But aside from these key questions, Bill explained that IIED and Hivos did not want to put a firm structure around the network, as this would be contradictory to the whole point of the network. Bill went on to explain IIED's historic interest in smallholders.

Mainza asked whether Bill felt there was convergence between the issues the groups had identified and the aims that IIED initially had. Bill replied that he was very interested in the two "flavours" of the group – with one group focussing on the more theoretical aspects at the policy level and the other working on issues closer to the ground.

One member felt it was vital that the network operates on the basis of co-responsibility and multilateralism rather than bilateralism. Transparency is vital as is a clear idea of operational mechanisms, methods and having a clear work plan. This member disagreed with the macro/micro division of the two groups (in response to Bill's comment). She felt that both groups were dealing with both micro and macro levels. She reiterated the importance of building strong links between the two groups.

One member felt it was important to understand who owns the outputs.

Josine from Hivos explained the origins of Hivos' Knowledge Programme. She described how Hivos has many scattered initiatives with the best of intentions, but that these were not always contributing to meaningful change. How could they do things differently? If there is so much knowledge, why is this knowledge not succeeding in making a difference? Hivos wanted to fill gaps in existing knowledge and work towards pluralism rather than fundamentalism. This is how the knowledge programme came into being. Bishwadeep from Hivos, India, recognised that many people were exploring similar issues but that there was a lack of communication between them. Hivos felt that their work could be enriched through learning from others. The particular group he works in has also placed more emphasis on small producers and producer organisations. How can the contributions of smallholders be enhanced?

Josine felt Hivos needed to be better at prioritising the issues they work on and by listening to others, Hivos might be able to refine their agenda. She felt the partnership between researchers, people in the field and development actors is very relevant. Those people that have experience should collaborate to identify outputs and areas of work.

A member from Latin America remarked how the roots of the network show very interesting partnership between donors, research and policy actors to explore how development cooperation can fulfil its mission. This is urgent considering we are not far from the MDG deadlines, with northern countries far from fulfilling their goals.

Diego summarised the discussion by explaining the need for us all to work as equals, without overestimating the role of co-ordination and administration but not ignoring it either.

Further discussion on issues and group work

The groups went away to continue their discussion of issues – they felt it was important to clearly define outputs and links between the groups. Josine also asked the groups to bear in mind how their work would think about the future challenges small-scale farmers might face.

Communications – how should the network communicate and what tools should it use?

Hapee from Hivos presented various platforms or communications systems the network could use to communicate.

Hapee described four levels of 'communication' interventions. The 1st level is obtaining information, synthesising and storing it. It allows for housekeeping and co-ordination. At the moment only Mainumby is doing this. Level two is the level at which members are in touch with one another and exchange information and their work. This might be achieved directly through e-mails, or through blogs. Level three is the level at which the group is linked with other networks. This could potentially be very important and play an important role in linking the work this programme does to the work of others. The 4th level is communication with the general public which will be explored at a later date.

In level one, Hivos and IIED can play a role, but Mainumby will manage the information. For level one, Hapee explained how the tool Dropbox is currently being used. This acts like an external hard drive. For level two, the tool DGroups might be able to be used and Hapee can help with this. For levels three and four Ning can be used, though the links between DGroups and Ning can be a little confusing. There would need to be further discussion on what would be used.

Hapee wanted to look for existing tools so that nothing has to be specifically developed for the network. Many of the existing tools can fulfil with the network needs. He wanted the group to bear in mind that Ning has stated to charge for the use of its tool, so that was something for the network to consider. DGroup on the other hand is run by several development organisations in the field, so users will never be charged for using the platform.

People in the network were asked who is familiar with DGroups and Ning. Three people had used Ning and two people had used DGroups. For Ning, the focus is very much on networking and the front of a Ning page is public. Parts can be hidden though and members require a log-in. You can become members of other networks and start discussion forums. Subgroups are also possible to have on Ning. The benefit of DGroups is that alerts can come straight to your e-mail, rather than members having to access the site.

DGroups can have an announcement section and a section for discussion. The interface for DGroups will be improved soon.

One member asked whether DGroups can be linked to other networks. Hapee explained that DGroups is mostly used for closed networks. Another member felt it would be best to wait and see which works best rather than making any decisions now. At the moment e-mail is enough, but DGroups could be a useful next step up from this. Another member felt it was important to remember that these are tools rather than ends in themselves and they need to be decentralised. The information tools that the network already uses could be reviewed.

How can IIED communications department help the network?

Liz Carlile from IIED described more about what IIED does in terms of its communications. She described how many people are in the IIED communications team, and explained that the team undertakes media, print, web and policy work. IIED tries to ensure that there is web access to IIED's work for Northern and increasingly Southern audiences. She explained that the communication strategy of IIED is above all about accessibility and availability of information, of language used and of translation. IIED are also trying to do more on video and audio and have tried to increase its impact in the media arena.

The network needs to think about its external communications strategy. What is the level of ambition, how is the network going to communicate with international audiences? There will be challenging questions around context, audiences, resources, time and skills. Is the network going to focus on corridors of power? Is it going to concentrate on particular policy-makers?

IIED communications team can help support the network with its communications. It can help with media, policy, web and print work. Liz explained that IIED is really here to support the network. IIED can be engaged as early on as the network needs.

One member responded by saying that he felt it was necessary to really think about how the network's work on small producers can reach various audiences. The members own networks can be used to redistribute information in their own areas of work, but being selective about who information should be disseminated to, is vital.

Diego felt that communications offered an example of where a Northern institution can play a key supporting role in the network. It would be great to have IIED support the network. It was felt that it might be important to map the experience that members already have in communications. Then the network can explore what can be used from existing members, also.

A question was raised over whether external communication would then be rooted through IIED. There would be benefits to doing so because there would be a coherent, centralised voice, but other forms of communication might be lost. Liz felt it was important for the network to play on their strengths. IIED could help with international dissemination strategies, but communication should not be centralised. IIED can help individual members to discuss their communication's strategies. IIED could help map the network's strengths. Diego reminded the group that the choice to use IIED for communications is completely voluntary.

How to measure success, presented by Josine

Josine asked the group to consider what they would love to see and what they would expect to see from the network. She would, for example, love to see farmers empowered to access the network, but she would expect to see some very good materials for other organisations.

One member felt they would love to see millions of farmers leading a better life, but doesn't know what to expect. One member mentioned farmers having access to good business and obtaining benefits from this. He felt this was possible to obtain. Other comments on what members would love to see included smallholders living without poverty; smallholders being sustainable and not dependent on donors; equity and a level playing field. In terms of what members expected to see, other comments included: small farmer organisations empowered to realise the opportunities in their work; a tangible plan on how we can influence farmer prosperity through policy statements or real action; required knowledge to contribute to increase the income and improve the living standards of small farmers; some practical results to generate policies that improve lives for smallholders; some insights about what might be possible for small farmers.

Josine asked the network to keep their goals in mind (or what they expect to see), in order to ensure the network is moving in the right direction. As a group the network needs to be able to monitor progress. The network needs to be clear on the journey it wants to take and where it is headed – the theory of change. The network's aim is to strengthen small producer agency. How can the network reach this point? If we can learn, generate knowledge and have a deeper understanding of knowledge we can influence networks and change policies and practices. It might be useful to have a series of signposts so that the network knows it is on track.

Josine explained that one option for measuring progress might be outcome mapping – which explores the behaviour of people or organisations and how this may have changed as a result of the work of the network. HIVOS and IIED are considering using this tool for their own evaluation, but wanted to share this with the group in case they felt it might also be relevant for the work of the network. Josine explained that it might be necessary to use experts to help the network map its outcome and frequently monitor progress.

Diego felt it was vital to monitor progress of the network itself. Half of the story would be about the whole network and learning process itself, rather than just the work it does.

One member commented that outcome mapping might be a good tool. A sense of outcomes is vital, both at the network level and at the small producer level.

The groups went away to continue discussion of their issues and workplan.

Group presentations

Group One (policy) spent more time discussing their work plan, their outputs and who would be doing what.

The group co-ordinator would be Falguni. The key outputs will be the analytical framework for policies – this framework gives the principles and guidelines for including and incentivising small farmers in policies. The framework will allow each policy to then be analysed from the smallholder perspective. This work would be completed at the end of month two (three months from the spring school).

One stage of work would involve country studies to explore which policies are specific to farmers and agriculture and analyse how these lead to success or failures for farmers? What is the current state of policy? Luis and Morrison will be key co-ordinators of that stage of research. This would be complete after the 5th month (six months from now).

A second stage of research will involve the ‘best model, or scenario analysis’. This demonstrates how given routes have impacts that are best for smallholders. Mainza warned that this would not be a silver bullet. Mainza, Trilochan and Luis would be co-ordinators of this. This would be complete at the end 10 months.

A key output of group one’s work would be an action plan for policy change - identifying a good line of action for improving policy for smallholders. This would be complete after 14 months.

Timelines were presented in more detail (see presentation) and consensus on final deliverables would be decided on the following week. In terms of documents and deliverables, Liz would help with these. Forming a set of rules for engagement – how the group is going to work, budgets and resources, was seen as important. Diego would work on this. It was recognised as important that stakeholders are engaged throughout the research process, particularly the second group whose input and advice was seen as invaluable.

Group Two (smallholder organisation) explained how they had narrowed their scope since the previous day. They recognised a key gap in existing research to be: How can farmer’s agency be enhanced so as to have an early warning system to identify upcoming risks and volatile situations?

The group felt the most important thing was to fix an anchor – a bilingual person for Spanish and English. They hoped to achieve this in the first month. After two months the group felt they would want to reflect with network members and other constituents to understand their opinions. Mohammed and Lorenzo would be responsible for this. The next stage would be to develop a portfolio of lessons of best and worst practice from in-depth case studies.

A validation process was also needed, through connection with the other group. Perhaps here an external facilitator could be used to bring in other issues. From this a shortlist of issues to focus on could be developed.

All members would be responsible for documentation and outreach.

The floor was then opened for discussion

One network member suggested that it would be helpful to have a short document to understand the plan of the groups in more depth. Other members agreed and 10th May was identified as the deadline for this.

One member asked group one what the concept of 'best model' means? Group One explained that it is a methodology rather than a model. It is a list or a guide that identifies how to create and implement successful policies.

There was some discussion about how groups one and two could be linked. It was felt that links could be made through group one identifying policies that are proofed against volatility. Policy analysis needs to take into account that we do not operate in a static environment. In addition the two groups could decide on data that both groups could benefit from having – this would link the two groups. It could explore who would be farming in 20 years time for example or how deeply globalisation will penetrate the countryside? The importance of looking into the future was reiterated, as was the need for the work to be 'cutting edge'. Diego reminded the group that 'cutting edge' means different things to different people.

One member felt it was important that the research be supported by factual reports and are externally assessed. Peer review was seen as an important tool for quality control.

Members re-iterated the importance of undertaking analysis at three different levels: local, national and international. In addition, the focus should not just be on export markets.

A group member emphasised the importance of having mechanisms in place to ensure the two groups communicate effectively with one another. Can analytical frameworks be shared for example?

Diego went on to discuss the budget – though this could only be done broadly as final figures were not available. Diego mentioned that there would be funds for publications and workshops if required and some money for each person in the group. At the end of May Diego would have a clearer figure on budgets. It was considered important that there be some budget space for cross-cutting work between the two groups.

The issue of translation was discussed, as this had been expensive to date. Diego felt it was not feasible to have to translate every document. Resources need to be used efficiently.

One member felt there needed to be clearer thinking on documents, how many would be produced etc, as there needs to be sufficient funds for this.

Concluding thoughts

Before the 'spring school' was drawn to a close, members were asked to give their concluding thoughts about the network –what worked, what didn't, are you in, are you out?

Members felt the network had made good progress and members appeared to be very pleased to have been invited and be part of the network (at this point Maggie and Morrison had already left). They felt it was a diverse group which brought many challenges but also benefits. There were many leaders, but the groups worked. Many members felt they had learnt a lot and had been exposed to new cultures. One member felt they were "going back a better person than they had come".

There were concerns about "too much English" but members felt the most important thing was to have empathy within the group for one another and each other's context. Flexibility in ways of working was also seen as important.

Some members felt the moderation was confusing and that at the end of each day and session it would have been useful to summarise the agreements reached. More field visits was also regarded as invaluable. Members felt it was important to have the next meeting in the developing world.

Members felt co-ordinators would be necessary to pull the group alone, but that these should be internal co-ordinators. External facilitators can bring their own baggage.

One member commented that having external speakers was useful and that the idea of a third group to internal manage the network, budget, resources etc was potentially useful.

The importance of meeting deadlines was emphasised. Excitement and enthusiasm was seen as vital for the survival for the network. It was seen as important to remember what value the network adds as a group, rather than working as individuals.

Many felt friendships had been forged and if life was improved for even one family of farmers, the network would be a success.

The group discussed that Ujiwal, who is missing, could be in group two. It was mentioned that it might be useful to have a representative from China.

Diego thanked the group for coming and pursuing the network, despite the difficulties faced. He hoped that the network would see the value of what they are doing and would now be able to face the hardest part of trying to have an impact. He reiterated the importance of network members connecting to networks they are already part of and the usefulness of new technologies in keeping everyone connected.