

Group Formation, Learning and Farmer Field School in Ngarenanyuki

Development of commercial field vegetable
production, distribution and marketing for the
East African market

Ngarenanyuki, Arusha
30th March-1st April, 2009

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

FFS: Farmer Field School

1 INTRODUCTION

The project the “Development of commercial field vegetable production, distribution and marketing for the East African market” has the goal of contributing to a vital rural economy of Tanzania and Kenya through the development of effective and integrated field vegetable chains for the domestic and regional market in East Africa. The project activities were launched in 2007 and the following two pilot activities carried out in 2008:

- Pilot to improve linkage of domestic tomato supply chains to local high segment markets (A).
- Pilot to improve the Tanzania-Mombasa cross-border tomato product chains (B)

Pilot A had the following objectives:

1. To analyse requirements, demand and institutional setting of the high segment market;
2. To organise tomato farmer groups who have the ambition and potential to meet the requirements of the high segment market;
3. To support farmer groups producing the required tomatoes for the high market segment;
4. To provide high quality tomatoes to consumers.

Pilot B had the following objectives:

1. To identify farmer groups in Ngarenanyuki that are currently linked to the Mombasa tomato markets.
2. To increase awareness with these groups of Mombasa market demands.
3. To identify bottle-necks within the existing chains
4. To train product chain participants on improvement of bottle necks.

The project has been working with smallholder tomato producers. However, to strengthen structures for group learning processes and market linkages, improve production-marketing chain, address associated constraints observed in the pilot phase, and to initiate activities that can lead to sustainability of the Action, the project envisages to adopt group learning approach, farmer field school (FFS), in Ngarenanyuki. The FFS approach will be used for building local structures for group learning and experimentation, cover technical aspects of production and improve linkages for tomato marketing.

This report describes the outcome of the training sessions held and observations made during the training of farmers in Ngarenanyuki in the period 30th March-1st April 2009. The purpose of this training/mission was to:

- Introduce farmers to FFS group learning concept; and to
- Discuss with farmers group formation and associated group structures; and to
- Introduce the concept of group revolving fund.

The mission programme is presented in **Appendix 1**.

2. FARMERS TRAINING NGARENANYUKI

2.1. Programme

A general program was developed at the start of the training, but was adjusted during the course based on the progress made and specific priorities expressed. The overall program covered the following areas:

- Introduction and preliminaries
- Introduction to group learning and farmer field school methodology
- Group formation, processes and structures
- Group revolving fund

2.2 Introduction and preliminaries

Mathew (of Multiflower LTD) welcomed the participants to the training workshop and gave a background to the training. Thereafter a self introduction was made by participants in turn. The workshop attendance on the first day of the workshop was as follows:

- Jackson's group: 8
- Semu's group: 4 persons
- Workshop facilitator: 1
- Organiser-Multiflower:1

Attendance on the second day of the workshop was as follows:

- Jackson's group: 11
- Semu's group: 5 persons
- Workshop facilitator: 1
- Organiser-Multiflower:1



Names of farmers who attended the meeting are presented as **Appendix 2**.

2.3 Introduction to group learning and FFS methodology

The necessity for participatory group learning as embedded in FFS methodology was discussed. The following areas were covered in depth in the training sessions:

- Why group learning and farmer field school;
- Farmer field school concept and definition;
- Principles of farmer field school;
- Characteristics of farmer field school;
- Learning contracts and agreements as pre-requisites for group learning and FFS activities; and

- FFS field guide/time table (example given with details to be covered during the next training session).



2.4 Group formation, processes and structures

The following were discussed with the farmers:

- What is a group? Why form a group?
- Characteristics of a successful group

Examples:

- ⇒ Members working together as a team and trust each other
- ⇒ Groups with well developed vision, goals and objectives
- ⇒ Groups with strong democratic and transparent leadership
- ⇒ Groups with clear definition and responsibilities of leaders
- ⇒ Groups registered/being recognized
- ⇒ Have a group meeting site
- ⇒ Group norms and rules in place and are being adhered to
- ⇒ Sustained attendance rates
- ⇒ Good time keeping
- ⇒ Groups with proper record keeping and accountability procedures
- ⇒ Groups with a constitution
- ⇒ Groups conducting regular meetings with record of attendance in place
- ⇒ Groups choosing group officials regularly as per the constitution
- ⇒ Groups with host teams in place
- ⇒ Groups with a bank account etc.

- Group leadership and their roles
 - Chairperson/assistant
 - Secretary/assistant
 - Treasurer
 - Committee members



- Formation of sub-groups/host teams and their roles
 - ⇒ Why sub-groups?
 - ⇒ Composition of host teams (moderator; secretary)
 - ⇒ Roles of host teams

2.5 Group Revolving Fund

Open discussions were made with the farmers (both Jackson and Semu's group members) on revolving fund. A summary of major issues discussed is outlined below:

2.5.1. Why group revolving fund?

A discussion session was initiated on how the farmers see themselves benefiting from the revolving fund. After discussions with the group members, the following came out as some of the reasons and or "why the group revolving fund?"

- To help group members to enhance tomato productivity and marketing
- To enhance group members access to inputs for production of tomatoes
- To enhance access to cash inputs for group members for tomato production and marketing

2.5.2. Target group and objectives

- It was agreed that the group revolving fund will target only the tomato growers in Jackson's and Semu's group in the initial stage/phase. The boundaries within which the revolving fund will operate will be clearly defined in the proposal (i.e. how will the revolving fund be used to make improvements in the tomato production-marketing value chain).

2.5.3. Administration of the Revolving Fund

For group revolving fund to succeed the following were discussed with the group:

a) The necessity of a strong group

A strong group is the foundation of success for the revolving fund. Such a group need to put in place the group structures and processes as presented in section 2.3, for example, the group needs to have a leadership structure and its own by-laws/constitution.

b) A group bank account

A group bank account with approved signatories from group members is needed for carrying out financial transactions.

c) Planning and financial (sub) committee

A (sub) committee to process and approve applications will be necessary for the success of such a Revolving Fund.

d) Application procedure

The group should discuss application procedures they would like put in place for accessing the revolving fund. This involves, among others: letters of application, guarantee system etc.

e) Revolving fund regulations

A successful Revolving Fund operates on the basis of rules and regulations formulated and agreed upon by all members of the group. This includes description of among others:

- If an applicant wants inputs, can he/she be directed to a particular agro-vet to get the inputs (such as fertilisers, pesticides etc) or should he/she be given money to purchase inputs from agrovet of choice?
- How much can one borrow if an applicant requires cash money?
- Will the revolving fund members (group members) borrow funds with or without interest?
- Repayment period
- Loan recovery system

2.5.4. *Sustaining the revolving fund*

A discussion was initiated on how the revolving fund will be sustained beyond the initial seed money of € 500 per group. The following suggestions came from farmers:

- Charge interest, although at lower rate than commercial banks or SACCOs
- Farmers to contribute to the fund in the future (not in this phase) in form of shares once the initial phase of the revolving fund becomes successful.

3. PLANNING FOR THE NEXT THREE MONTHS (APRIL-JUNE 2009)

3.1. Group issues

- Jackson and Semu will hold meetings with their group members separately to create awareness on the necessity of group formation and to formally enlist the current farmers [*Indicators: Names of group members; Minutes of meeting*]
- Members of each group will hold discussions and draw by-laws for group operation [*Indicators: Minutes of meeting; group by-law*].
- Each group will hold elections for various posts in group leadership structure. The group leadership structure will be discussed and agreed upon with all members; example include Chairperson (and assistant), Secretary (and assistant) and a treasurer [*Indicators: Functional committee; Minutes of meeting*]
- Each group will have host teams (sub-groups). The number of host teams and their roles will be decided upon by all group members [*Indicators: Functional host teams; list of host teams*].
- Each group will have a register/rollcall [*Indicator: Rollcall/register of attendance*].
- Each group will open group-bank account [*Indicator: Bank record/statement of opening account*].

3.2. Learning issues on FFS

- Each group will have a central learning plot; on-going trials can be used for learning?
- Each group will discuss and agree on the following elements of group learning contract:
 - Venue of group meetings (close to experimental plot);
 - Frequency of group meetings (twice a month, once a week?? etc);
 - Meeting day (selected one day within the week);
 - Duration of meetings (2-3 hours as agreed by all group members);
 - Group meeting time (morning/afternoon; starting time; ending time); and
 - Formation of host teams (see 3.1 above).

3.3. Proposal writing

Each group will write a proposal on how the revolving fund will be put to use. Among the many elements to be included in the proposal, the following were discussed:

- Introduction, including group description/background
- Objectives of the revolving fund (what will the revolving fund be used for?) and the current challenges that the revolving fund will address.
- Target group (Who will access the revolving fund?)
- Administration of the revolving fund
 - Opening of bank account
 - Role of planning and financial (sub) committee
 - Application procedures for accessing the revolving fund
 - Revolving Fund regulations (How much can one borrow; Can someone who is requesting for tomato inputs be given such from an Agro-vet without necessarily cash money? Interest (if any); repayment rate, guarantee system etc.)
- A plan on how the revolving fund will be sustained (and or expanded) in the future.

4. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The training sessions went on smoothly as planned. The following general observations were made:

- The farmers are not formally organised into groups and it is envisaged that the training they have received during this mission (group formation and group processes and structures) will be a stimulus for formal group organisation. Group organisation is a pre-requisite for successful participatory group learning and operation of a revolving fund.
- The groups were enthusiastic to initiate a revolving fund and to expand the operations of the revolving fund by including “low interest rates” to be paid on principal borrowed. This, however, can only succeed when members of the group share a common vision, objectives and have a common bond, and when there is functional group structure and clear and transparent leadership.
- The farmers recommended the use of a revolving fund for tomato production and marketing as tomato production and marketing are perceived to be the common

bond bringing the farmers together. However, possibilities exist for expanding the what the revolving fund can do in the future.

- Although this mission laid the foundation on group learning and farmer field school, all the essential steps of such participatory learning process could not be covered in the short time duration of the mission. It is recommended that the remaining elements of the group learning and farmer field school be addressed in the subsequent/follow-up missions before the group learning process can be actively implemented.
- Although the mission set the deadline, together with farmers, for initiating/operating group structures and for writing a revolving fund proposal to be 30th June 2009 (three months), farmers were enthusiastic and, it is likely that these requirements might be met before June 2009.

APPENDIX 1: FFS SUPPORT MISSION PROGRAMME

Day	Date	Location	Audience	Topic
Sunday	29 th March	Travel: Nairobi-Arusha		
Monday	30 th March	Arusha	Discussions with Mathew	Preparations + discussions with Mathew
Tuesday	31 st March	Arusha/Ngarenanyuki	Farmers	Training session
Wednesday	1 st April	Arusha/Ngarenanyuki	Farmers	Training session
Thursday	2 nd April	Travel: Arusha-Nairobi		

APPENDIX 2: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS (FARMERS)

Tuesday: 31/3/2009

a) Jacksons group

1. Gadi nassary
2. Samweli Nassary
3. Frank John
4. Elibariki nnko
5. Jackson lema
6. Kankira Nassary
7. Pallangyo (Mtendaji wa kata)
8. Omari (Game Officer Ngarenanyuki)

b) Semu's group

1. Semu S. Kaayo
2. Zakayo S. Mbise
3. Matie Emmanuel
4. Benson S. Nnko

Wednesday: 1/4/2009

a) Jacksons group

Ndesaulwa S. Mbise
Kaanaukira Senyaeli
Elibariki M. Nassary
Kanaely E. Akgoo
Gadi nassary
Samweli Nassary
Frank John
Elibariki nnko
Jackson lema
Wilfred N. Pallangyo (Mtendaji wa kata)
Omari Saidi (Game Officer Ngarenanyuki)

b) Semu's group

Semu S. Kaayo
Zakayo S. Mbise
Futaeli Z. Mbise
Matie Emmanuel
Benson S. Nnko