

Bulletin 376

Development Policy & Practice

Access of the poor to agricultural services

The role of farmers' organizations in social inclusion

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Bertus Wennink, Suzanne Nederlof and Willem Heemskerk

Foreword

Noah Mofuna is a farmer from Central-Togo. Some years back he, together with ten other cowpea producers from the same village, joined in a Farmers' Organization for Cowpea Production (FOCP). That year the group sold their cowpea for a good price through the intermediary of an NGO. FOCP also managed to convince the local authorities to help them with the transport of the produce and they contacted another agricultural service provider to assist them in testing improved cowpea varieties. Noah is very proud to belong to the group. People in the village often turn to him for advice. Yet, it is not possible for everybody to join. For example, Noah's neighbour, Sarah Lawat, a 60-year old widow without children whose husband died from HIV/AIDS, cannot pay the contribution that group members collect (even though Noah considers it a small amount, i.e., the equivalent of 50 euro cents a week). She also does not have the strength to help them with the work in the common group field; she barely manages to cultivate her own small village plots. Noah reflects: 'farmer groups are good for me and those who are like me, but what about Sarah, and the other less-endowed fellow villagers? How can they lobby for better prices, contact NGOs and get the local authorities to improve infrastructure?'¹

Sarah is not alone, there are many others who, like her, do not join farmers' organizations, sometimes because they are weak, female, old, or poor and in other cases because they are nomads, herders, migrants, from a minority ethnic group or ill (HIV/ AIDS, malaria etc. are all too common amongst rural poor). In yet other situations, sometimes farmers who do not grow state-supported market-oriented commodities are excluded from access to agricultural services such as extension and/or input supply. As a result the specific needs of these categories of farmers often are not provided for or defended. It is these issues that this bulletin is about: under what conditions might people like Sarah also benefit from agricultural services and what could be the role of farmers' organizations in this endeavour? Is it even possible that farmer organizations facilitate access to services for the poorest? What is needed to make deprived farmers benefit more, and what strategies would enhance social inclusion?

More specifically, this bulletin attempts to address farmer organization-related issues with the ultimate goal of developing guidelines for a pro-active strategy for social inclusion of disadvantaged groups or individuals in farmers' organizations to enhance their improved access to agricultural services. Development practitioners and other players in the field of farmer empowerment and farmer organizations as well as policy makers who could use these guidelines are the intended audience of this publication.

Note

- 1 This is a fictional case.

Abbreviations

ACooBéPA	<i>Association des Coopératives Béninoises de Planteurs d'Anacardier</i>
ADIAB	<i>Association des Distributeurs d'Intrants Agricoles du Bénin</i>
AGM	Annual General Meeting
AGROP	<i>Association des Groupements de Producteurs</i>
AIC	<i>Association Interprofessionnelle du Coton</i>
AKSCG	Association of Kilimanjaro Specialty Coffee Growers
AMSDP	Agricultural Marketing Sector Development Programme
ANPC	<i>Association Nationale des Producteurs de Coton</i>
ASDP	Agriculture Sector Development Programme
CAGIA	<i>Coopérative d'Achat et de Gestion des Intrants Agricoles</i>
CARDER	<i>Centre d'Action Régional pour le Développement Rural</i>
CBO	Community Based Organization
CeCPA	<i>Centre Communal pour la Promotion Agricole</i>
CeRPA	<i>Centre Régional pour la Promotion Agricole</i>
CLCAM	<i>Caisse Locale de Crédit Agricole et Mutuel</i>
CLECAM	<i>Caisse Locale d'Épargne et de Crédits Agricoles Mutuels</i>
CNIA	<i>Centre National pour l'Insemination Artificielle</i>
CPU	Central Pulping Unit
CRA-CF	<i>Centre de Recherche Agricole – Coton et Fibres</i>
CSPR	<i>Central de Sécurisation de Paiement et de Recouvrement</i>
DEDRAS	<i>Organisation pour le Développement Durable, le Renforcement et l'Auto-promotion des Structures communautaires</i>
DFF	District Farmer Fora
EAFF	East African Farmers' Federation
EZCORE	Eastern Zone Client-Oriented Research and Extension
FANAPRA	<i>Fédération Nationale des Producteurs Agricoles</i>
FBG	Farmer Business Group
FBO	Farmer Based Organization
FERWATHE	<i>Fédération Rwandaise des Producteurs du Thé</i>
FF	Farmer Fora
FFS	Farmer Field School
FG	Farmer Group

FOCP	Farmers' Organizations for Cowpea Production
FUPRO	<i>Fédération des Unions des Producteurs du Bénin</i>
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPA	<i>Groupements des Planteurs d'Anacardier</i>
GV	<i>Groupement Villageois</i>
GVPC	<i>Groupement Villageois des Producteurs du Coton</i>
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFAP	International Federation of Agricultural Producers
IMBARAGA	<i>Syndicat des Agriculteurs et Eleveurs du Rwanda</i>
INADES	<i>Institut Africain pour le Développement Economique et Social</i>
INGABO	<i>Syndicat Rwandais des Agriculteurs et des Eleveurs</i>
INRAB	<i>Institut National des Recherches Agricoles du Bénin</i>
ISAR	<i>Institut des Sciences Agronomiques du Rwanda</i>
KILICAFE	Association of Kilimanjaro Specialty Coffee Growers in Tanzania
KIT	Royal Tropical Institute
KNCU	Kilimanjaro Native Cooperative Union
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MT	Metric Tons
MVIWAMO	<i>Mtandao wa Vikundi vya Wakulima wa Wilaya ya Monduli</i>
MVIWATA	<i>Mtandao wa Vikundi vya Wakulima ya Tanzania</i>
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRMC	Natural Resource Management Committee
PADEP	Participatory Agricultural Development Programme
PADSE	<i>Projet d'Amélioration et de Diversification des Systèmes d'Exploitation</i>
PELUM	Participatory Ecological Land Use Management
ROPARWA	<i>Réseau des Organisations Paysannes du Rwanda</i>
SC	Steering Committee
SCAA	Specialty Coffee Association of America
SIP	<i>Société Indigène de Prévoyance</i>
SMDR	<i>Société Mutuelle de Développement Rural</i>
SONAPRA	<i>Société Nationale pour la Promotion Agricole</i>
SWOT	Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats
TACRI	Tanzania Coffee Research Institute
TCB	Tanzania Coffee Board
TCGA	Tanganyika Coffee Growers' Association
TNS	Technoserve
ToT	Training of Trainers
TWT	Taylor Winch Tanzania Ltd
UCP	<i>Union Communale des Producteurs</i>
UCPC	<i>Union Communale des Producteurs de Coton</i>
UDP	<i>Union Départementale des Producteurs</i>
UDPC	<i>Union Départementale des Producteurs de Coton</i>
UEEB	<i>Union des Eglises Evangéliques du Bénin</i>
ULGPA	<i>Union Locale des Groupements des Planteurs d'Anacardier</i>
USPP	<i>Union Sous-Prélectorale des Producteurs</i>
WFF	Ward Farmer Fora

Introduction

Justification

Farmers' organizations today play a much more prominent role in agricultural policy formulation and implementation in Sub-Saharan Africa than ever before. In a context of liberalization of the agricultural sector, privatization of delivery of goods and services, and political democratization, farmers' organizations claim their stake and are recognized as key stakeholders in rural development. For both the public and private sector, effective farmers' organizations present important opportunities such as: providing research and extension services to farmers and organizing the purchase of inputs and sale of products on a more cost-effective basis; mobilizing resources for local development; and representing the interests and collective voice of farmers in development fora (Bosc *et al.*, 2003; Chirwa *et al.*, 2005).

Farmers' organizations distinguish themselves from other public and private sector organizations through their membership base. These are rural organizations whose members share a common interest. Farmers' organizations are basically democratic organizations, often with a strong 'grass roots' basis that (on behalf of their members) may apply different approaches in their relations and interactions with other stakeholders in the agricultural sector. These approaches are based on a combination of style (cooperative or confrontational) and basis (evidence and science-based or interest and value-based). The resulting respective functions: advisory and lobbying (cooperational) and advocacy and activism (confrontational), are in the interests of an organization's members. This results in a collective voice of the members through representation, and improved services through (reorientation and/or provision of technical and economical services) that more effectively respond to members' needs (Bosc *et al.*, 2003).

The services that are being provided to members, whether by farmers' organizations themselves or by third parties, include knowledge services such as agricultural

research, advisory (extension and technology dissemination) and other types of farmer training. Such services are increasingly considered key factors for advancing rural development. However, improving agricultural practices and processes through effective knowledge application, requires two basic pre-conditions: access of farmers to appropriate knowledge sources and services, and a conducive context that incites knowledge application (World Bank, 2006). Farmers' organizations can play a key role in agricultural innovation, since they have the capacity to pool, aggregate and disseminate knowledge and information (Collion and Rondot, 1998). Moreover, they are increasingly positioned in both service networks and supply chains to coordinate activities and promote an enabling environment for innovation.

Poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa is still mostly a rural phenomenon despite rapid urbanization; more than 70% of the poor live in rural areas (IFAD, 2007). Agriculture remains a key sector for alleviating poverty in rural areas and has received renewed attention on the development cooperation agenda (see for example DFID, 2005; OECD, 2006; and World Bank, 2007). Agriculture is still the main economic activity for most rural people; it remains an important source of income for farmer households and contributes to sustainable financing of social-sector services (Irz *et al.*, 2001). Poverty is the result of economic, social and political processes that often reinforce each other. Meagre assets, difficulties in grasping the opportunities that are potentially available and exercising countervailing power, often related to the policy and social context, are determining factors in the situation of the rural poor. Vulnerability to events that are out of their control often exacerbates their poverty situation (World Bank, 2001).

Strategies aimed at alleviating poverty therefore include three key elements: identifying opportunities (e.g., access to natural resources, markets and service provision to build up assets); facilitating empowerment (e.g., participation by the poor in political processes and decision-making); and, enhancing security (Ibid). Social *inclusion* of service provision essentially refers to the access to services by the most vulnerable farmers in rural society. Access to knowledge is required for growth, but if the context is not right, or if farmers' access is not inclusive (of the rural poor), such growth will not lead to well-balanced development and certainly not to pro-poor development. Social *exclusion* leads to research and development agendas which do not include the priorities of the poor, resulting in constrained access by the poor to appropriate knowledge and hence to their exclusion from economic and social progress.

Farmers' organizations are increasingly involved in orienting services towards the specific needs of their members and/or providing these services themselves. However, although the role of farmers' organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa is rapidly increasing in importance, there are significant risks that individual farmers and/or groups are being excluded from these services. There are also many farmers who do not join

farmers' organizations. Sometimes this is because they are particularly poor or belong to vulnerable groups, such as female-headed households and widows, and in other cases because they are from a minority social or ethnic group, or disabled (HIV/AIDS-affected households are all too common amongst the rural poor). In other situations, subsistence farmers who do not produce marketable commodities may have difficulties in becoming members of farmers' organizations and therefore in accessing relevant agricultural services. As a result, the specific needs of these categories of farmers are often not provided for, or defended, and they are excluded from effective service provision. Social exclusion or inclusion in service provision unfolds through the interactions between the different stakeholders involved, including farmers' organizations and agricultural service providers in the public, private and 'third' sector¹, and is therefore strongly related to the institutional context.

Case studies drawn from experiences in Sub-Saharan Africa show that agricultural research and advisory services are increasingly channelled through farmers' organizations (Wennink and Heemskerk, 2006). Farmers' organizations that provide these services themselves, are often directly supported by NGOs and donors, and are increasingly being contracted to provide advisory services by the public sector, and sometimes also by the private sector. In addition, farmer groups and organizations increasingly voice their members' concerns and have a say in issues that impact farmers' livelihoods. These same case studies also show the discrepancy in dealing with service provision between more inclusive, mostly smaller, community-based farmer groups (those oriented towards enhanced livelihoods), and often less inclusive and larger commodity-based producer organizations (supply-chain oriented). This is the main focus of this bulletin: the role of farmers' organizations in facilitating access by the poorest farmers to agricultural services, and under which conditions such organizations can enhance social inclusion.

This bulletin

This bulletin focuses on two major questions: How do the poorest of the poor gain access to, and benefit from, agricultural services? What is the role of farmers' organizations in socially inclusive access to these services, and to what extent is membership of the farmers' organizations a determining factor for this? Answers to these questions will hopefully allow guidelines and strategies to be defined for improving the livelihoods of the rural poor by enhancing their access to agricultural services, including through farmers' organizations.

The subject of inclusion of farmers, their groups and organizations in setting research agendas, extension priorities and in carrying out field experiments is not addressed in this bulletin (for further information, see Nederlof, 2006). However, the importance of farmers' organizations in facilitating socially inclusive access to agricultural services,

and the relevance of including different categories of farmers in farmers' organizations, as well as their representative roles, forms the main topic of this bulletin. Who joins farmers' organizations, and why? What is the impact of group rules, procedures and mechanisms (of adherence, participation and relations with the surrounding environments) on the membership? What role do the members play within the organization? Which individuals and groups do the farmers' organizations represent in addition to their members? What is needed to help ensure that agricultural services are not exclusively aimed at the relatively richer farmers?

More specifically, this bulletin attempts to address these questions with the ultimate goals of developing guidelines for a proactive strategy for social inclusion of disadvantaged groups or individuals in enhanced access to agricultural services, through farmers' organizations. Development practitioners and other players in the field of farmer empowerment and farmers' organizations, as well as policymakers who could use these guidelines form the intended audience of this publication.

This bulletin is divided into two parts. Part I is an analysis of social inclusion and the role of farmers' organizations in access to agricultural services; Part II contains a description of the case studies (on which Part I is based). The first part discussed social inclusion within a context of poverty, sustainable livelihoods and empowerment. The context of farmers' organizations and their roles in obtaining access to service provision is described. The question of social inclusion of disadvantaged and vulnerable farmers within farmers' organizations is also addressed. A tentative conceptual framework consisting of issues relevant to an active social inclusion strategy is presented next. Experiences reported in the literature, as well as emerging ideas from several case studies (reported in Part II) that were developed simultaneously, were used when developing this framework. The conceptual framework should therefore be considered an outcome of the case studies as well as an input. The concluding remarks discuss the following issues: the policy context and enabling environment for pro-poor development; the nature (socially inclusive or exclusive) of farmers' organizations; the consequences of such social exclusiveness; the role of farmers' organizations in inclusion or exclusion in agricultural services; and the way in which farmers' organizations can enhance social inclusion in services.

Part II of this bulletin describes the case studies on farmers' organizations in Tanzania, Rwanda and Benin that were used for the analysis of social inclusion.

Note

- 1 The third sector comprises organizations that are not fully in the public or private sector, such as voluntary organizations and community groups.

Part I
Enhancing agricultural
service provision
for the rural poor

1 Background

Poverty and the poor

Poverty is the result of exclusion from economic, political and social processes, and for that reason, promoting opportunity (such as improving market functioning and stimulating economic growth) is important in fighting poverty. However that alone is not enough: poverty is also influenced by the unequal distribution of power and by social norms, values and customary practices (e.g., taboos on crop management practices, levelling mechanisms¹ and/or local/traditional justice), which might lead to exclusion. Therefore, empowerment of ‘the poor’ is also important in fighting poverty. A third pathway towards alleviating poverty consists of enhancing security by reducing risks of vulnerability, which can be both natural, man-made and/or economic (World Bank, 2001).

It therefore follows that there are several dimensions to ‘being poor’, such as:

1. lacking adequate food and shelter (due to no, or very low, income), poor access to education and health services, and other deprivations that keep a person from leading the kind of life that everyone values;
2. facing extreme vulnerability to ill health, economic dislocation and natural disasters; and,
3. being exposed to poor treatment by state institutions and society at large, and being powerless to influence key decisions affecting one’s life.

Economic growth and income are on the rise in developing countries (DfID, 2004). Yet, in general, those who are already richer benefit relatively more than those who are poor. It is important to point out that economic growth does not automatically lead to overall development and poverty alleviation (Øyen, 2001)², but may sometimes even lead to greater poverty³.

‘Empowerment’ and ‘security’ are not the only means to achieve ‘economic growth’ (Shirbekk and St.Clair, 2001). This bulletin adopts the multi-dimensional perspective of poverty, which development practitioners recognize in real life. To paraphrase Shirbekk and St.Clair (ibid: p. 15) who refer to Sen (1981):

Development ought not to be conceptualized as the achievement of modernization, industrialization and economic growth, but as the expansion of people’s capabilities and functionings.⁴

In order to consider the various dimensions of poverty and to put the poor in the centre, it is useful to adopt a sustainable livelihoods perspective⁵ (for more information, see IDS, 2006). A sustainable livelihoods perspective focuses on:

1. a holistic understanding of access to, and control over, capital (natural, financial, social, human and physical);
2. the context of vulnerability for the poor; and,
3. processes, institutions and policies at all levels that help or constrain people to use their different kinds of capital for improved livelihoods (DfID/FAO, 2000).

Such a perspective helps us find ways to enhance a policy and institutional environment, to better support poor people’s livelihoods while building on their strengths. Poor people have their own strategies to secure their livelihoods depending on such factors as their socioeconomic status, education and local knowledge, ethnicity and the stage in the life cycle of the household (Messer and Townsley, 2003).

Social exclusion and inclusion

It is important to have a clear understanding of what social inclusion means as it eventually determines how to develop useful strategies for enhancing social inclusion. In the case of disadvantaged and vulnerable farmers this means: to understand the way they access agricultural services, whether through actual membership of farmers’ organizations or through indirect representation by farmers’ organizations. When talking about social inclusion one cannot escape discussing social exclusion. A social exclusion perspective focuses on two sets of barriers to alleviate poverty, namely:

1. social relations (or lack thereof) that exclude people; and,
2. restricted access to institutions and organizations that matter for poverty alleviation, citizenship and rights (Beall and Piron, 2005).

Hence, social exclusion might be a reason why the poorest of the poor have less access to, and participate less often in, farmers’ organizations, and thus have less access to agricultural services. The most common definition for social exclusion is probably the one used by Eames and Adebawale (2002: p. 3):

Social exclusion is the condition of communities, groups and individuals who are economically and/or socially disadvantaged.

According to this definition, categories of socially excluded people include those living on (relatively) low(er) incomes and people from minority ethnic communities. However, a variety of different definitions for social exclusion are being used (Farrington, 2002).

Differences in the way in which social exclusion is defined relate to:

- Exclusion being considered as either a condition or the process itself.
- The people it affects. Exclusion affects individuals (through for example lack of social capital⁶), certain groups or everyone.
- The environment surrounding people. People's environment can constitute barriers and lead to exclusion from labour markets, breakdown of 'social systems', and/or (lack of) resources. Using the theory of social capital, social exclusion is considered an important cause of poverty (Toye and Infanti, 2004).

The following elements are essential for explaining the dimensions of social exclusion:

- Recognize the dynamic nature of social exclusion. Therefore, similar to the aforementioned understanding of poverty, exclusion can be considered a process and not a (fixed/static) condition. This helps to understand the causes of exclusion and consequently to develop a strategy for addressing these causes and including the 'poorest of the resource-poor farmers' in farmers' organizations to improve access to services and thereby their livelihoods. It also emphasizes the inter-connectivity of the causes of exclusion.
- In the same vein, social relationships are important in exclusion processes; this explains this bulletin's focus on social capital (see also Heemskerk and Wennink, 2004) and, as a result the need for active participation of both individuals and organized groups. After all, social exclusion affects each individual, as well as society as a whole.
- Along the same lines, exclusion not only involves the more material aspects of exclusion, but also the exclusion from social, economic, institutional, territorial and symbolic reference systems (for a discussion on these systems, see Farrington, 2002), and also includes economic, political or cultural aspects.

Shookner (2002) created a tool that he calls 'an inclusion lens'. This tool helps to understand inclusion (who are to be included, who will benefit, what are the measures that would promote inclusion) and to develop an action plan. The inclusion lens is also a tool for analyzing legislation, policies, programmes and practices, to determine whether they promote the social and economic inclusion of the poorer individuals, groups and communities. The 'inclusion lens' is a list of dimensions and elements that favour inclusion (see Table 1).

Table 1: An inclusion lens

Dimensions	Element of inclusion
Cultural	Valuing contributions of both women and men to society, recognizing differences, valuing diversity, positive identity, and anti-racist education.
Economic	Adequate income for basic needs and participation in society, poverty eradication, employment, capability for personal development, personal security, sustainable development, reducing disparities, giving value and support care.
Functional	Ability to participate, opportunities for personal development, valued social roles, and recognizing competence.
Participatory	Empowerment, freedom to choose, contribution to community, access to programmes, resources and capacity to support participation, involvement in decision-making, and social action.
Physical	Access to public places and community resources, physical proximity and opportunities for interaction, healthy/supportive environments, access to transportation, and sustainability.
Political	Affirmation of human rights, enabling policies and legislation, social protection for vulnerable groups, removing systemic barriers, willingness to take action, long-term view, multi-dimensional, citizen participation, and transparent decision-making.
Relational	Belonging, social proximity, respect, recognition, cooperation, solidarity, family support, and access to resources.
Structural	Entitlements, access to programmes, transparent pathways to access, affirmative action, community capacity building, inter-departmental links, inter-governmental links, accountability, open channels of communication, options for change, and flexibility.

Source: Shookner, 2002.

It is important to realize that social inclusion is not necessarily the solution to social exclusion (Beall and Piron, 2005) since some groups may deliberately choose to remain outside the ‘mainstream’. In other words: some groups ‘self-exclude’ themselves (Toye and Infanti (2004: p. 17), paraphrasing Jackson (2001)):

An inclusive group (or society as a whole) is characterized by a widely shared social experience and active participation, by a broad equality of opportunities and life chances for individuals and by the achievement of a basic level of well-being for all members (citizens).

A strategy towards social inclusion includes an approach of handing over the necessary means to poor people or empowering poor people with knowledge or other resources to give them the opportunity to generate their own tools to achieve enhanced livelihoods.

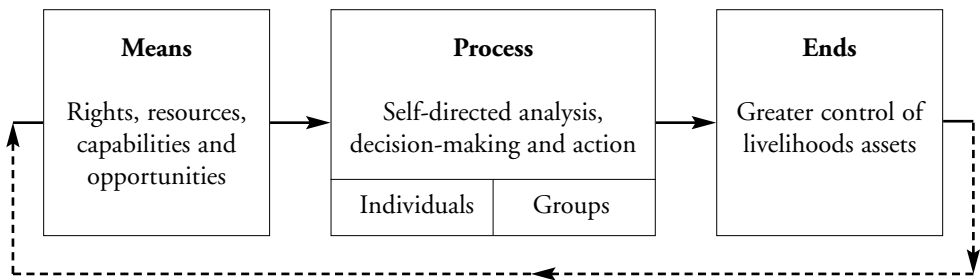
Empowerment and voice

The issue of inclusiveness of farmers' organizations and service provision to their members, and who benefits from these services, is closely related to the people's level of empowerment. Empowerment is about people taking increased control over their lives and destiny. In this bulletin, empowerment refers to (Kabeer, 2001):

The expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them.

Barlett (2004) presents a simple model of the steps involved in a transformation process towards empowerment (see Figure 1). All three steps are needed: generally a change in means establishes the potential for a change in process, and a change in process allows a change in ends. In turn, a change in ends might in itself bring about a further change in means, etc.

Figure 1: A transformation model of empowerment



Source: Barlett, 2004.

Means can involve many things, ranging from national legal and political systems to the resources and the skills of people themselves. Training, establishing farmers' organizations and linking them to stakeholders, all contribute to changing the means for empowerment.

Once people have increased their means it is important that they decide what to do with them. Only when people analyze for themselves, make their own decisions and determine their actions, can one state that they are really empowered. In some cases individuals decide, but in other cases it is a group decision; therefore the answer to the question of 'who decides' is relevant to understanding who is empowered.

The end (i.e., achievement of empowerment) involves an increased influence of people over the conditions (quality, security, dwelling etc.) of their lives. So the question then is: which conditions are people trying to change when they become empowered? One possible answer concerns changes in relationships (e.g., women in

relation to men, poor in relation to rich, or civil society in relation to the state). It is difficult for 'outsiders' such as development cooperation agencies to change these types of conditions. Increased control over livelihoods and assets is another possible response. People gain greater control over their human capital (e.g., knowledge, skills, health, etc.), social capital (within groups and networks), natural capital (e.g., land and water), physical capital (e.g., houses, roads and sanitation), and financial capital (e.g., savings, credit, wage rates). It is important to look at the livelihoods approach from the perspective of the people involved.

The question of what people want must be answered by themselves. They need to speak out and, in order to affect change, they also need to be heard and listened to, and their aspirations must be taken into account. In other words, people need to exercise their 'voice' (Bebbington and Thompson, 2004). Voice is therefore considered to be an important means of improving the responsiveness and inclusiveness of services. In a more pluralistic context of service provision, service users can leave and obtain their services from another provider, thus forcing service providers to improve, but in many other contexts this is not possible. Often there are either no alternative providers, users have little power and/or clients are in 'patronage networks' (Goetz and Gaventa, 2001). In this bulletin, 'voice' is defined as (Ibid):

The range of measures used by civil society actors to put pressure on service providers to demand better service outcome.

On the basis of case studies, Goetz and Gaventa (2001) distinguished three types of initiatives for making services more responsive (see Table 2):

However, the characteristics of both users and the services involved influence the way in which users, including the poorest, exercise their voice and the way in which providers respond. This concerns the nature of client relationships; the geographical dispersion or concentration of users; the social status of users; the costs of services; the market mechanisms involved; and, the way services are being delivered (Ibid). The most disadvantaged farmers, their organizations and agricultural service providers, therefore need to be involved to make knowledge work for more inclusive development. Exclusion of the poorest from the innovation system will probably prohibit rapid development of relevant knowledge and adoptable technologies, while specific knowledge of excluded groups will not be used. The agricultural innovation system perspective therefore refers to the need to involve all actors, including the most disadvantaged, in an innovation system that contributes to inclusive development (World Bank, 2006).

Table 2: Types of initiatives for making services more responsive

Citizens' initiatives	Joint civil society and public-sector initiatives	Public-sector initiatives
Awareness-raising and capacity building for mobilization	Implementation and precedent-setting (including partnerships)	Consultation on users' needs (for policies and services)
Information generation (research for advocacy)	Auditing	Setting standards
Lobbying to influence planning and policy formulation	Joint management of sector programmes	Incentives, sanctions and performance measures
Citizen-based monitoring and evaluation	Government frameworks for participatory planning	Service delivery 'ethos' in organizational culture Accessible (government) information and services New rights for citizens or clients

Source: Goetz and Gaventa (2001).

Notes

- 1 Levelling mechanisms aim to even out the distribution of wealth (Shrestha, 1990) and imply that people do not want to publicly display their wealth. Hence, people do not want to show too obviously if they are much richer than their neighbours.
- 2 Critics – for example Øyen (2001) – state that this is not clear in the World Development Report 2000/2001.
- 3 The USA, and more recently India, are probably the best examples of countries with high economic growth, but also extreme poverty.
- 4 Capabilities refer to what people can or cannot do, and functionings refer to what people actually do, or do not do (health, food, education).
- 5 Another, yet complementary perspective, is the 'Rights-based Approach' (see for example Mukhopadhyay and Sultan, 2005).
- 6 For more information about social capital, see Heemskerk and Wennink (2004). The term 'social capital' originates from the work of Bourdieu, who distinguishes between three forms of capital: economic capital, cultural capital and social capital. He defines social capital as 'the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintances and recognition'. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_capital). Using the theory of social capital, social exclusion is considered an important cause of poverty (Toye and Infanti, 2004). The theory of social capital gained popularity after Robert Putnam wrote a book entitled 'Bowling Alone' (2000). He analyzed what he has called the collapse of social capital in the USA. He distinguishes between 'bonding' and 'bridging' capital. Bonding occurs when you are socializing with people who are like you: same age, same race, same religion etc. But in order to create peaceful societies in a diverse multi-ethnic country, one needs to

have a second kind of social capital: bridging. Bridging is what you do when you make friends with people who are not like you, e.g., supporters from another football team. Putman argues that those two kinds of social capital, bonding and bridging, reinforce each other mutually. (From: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Putnam).

2 Farmers' organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa

Characteristics of farmers' organizations

Where institutions are humanly devised frameworks that shape human interaction (North, 1990), organizations are groups of individuals bound by some common purpose to achieve agreed objectives. A good example to describe the difference between an institution and an organization is to view it as a football game. The 'organization' here constitutes the players and the goal-keeper who take part in the game, while they have to play according to a set of rules and agreements between parties, which is the 'institution'. An organization is viable when it meets the following criteria (adapted from *ibid*; Debrah and Nederlof, 2002):

- Their members have a common mission or common objective to which they commit themselves.
- All members participate and/or contribute to achieving these objectives.
- The organization functions according to a set of rules (and these are respected).
- The organization mobilizes and manages human and financial resources that allow for enhancing autonomy and sustainability.

Farmers' organizations also respond to these criteria. However, the degree to which they respond may differ substantially and points to the enormous diversity of farmers' organizations. In this bulletin, the distinctive features of farmers' organizations, as compared to other organizations, whether public or private, are:

- Farmers' organizations are rooted in rural areas and related to activities such as primary production, processing and marketing of agricultural products, or related services.
- Members of farmers' organizations strive to improve their conditions (i.e., incomes and well-being) through primary production-related activities; these activities may be subsistence-oriented, market-oriented or a mix of the two.

- Such organizations are membership-based: the organization is led by members and, through collective action, works for its members. They are thus democratic associations of men and women.

A short history of farmers' organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa

Farmers' organizations and groups in Sub-Saharan Africa have existed for a long time, even though they presently occur in forms and structures that are different from before and have evolved in many shapes. The most ancient form of farmers' organization is represented by the 'self-help' groups, where farmers help each other out, for example at peak labour periods and for food security purposes. Such groups are based on social traditions and manage the relations of members within their own local society. These still exist today, but are sometimes overlooked as farmers' organizations, maybe because they are informal and often seasonal (e.g., only during harvest time). Yet they can be important building blocks for networks and genuine, grass-roots-based farmers' organizations (see for example the Tanzania cases in Wennink and Heemskerk, 2006).

In colonial times, governments and trading companies introduced certain forms of farmers' organizations to increase their profits, for example to facilitate the production and marketing of export crops. Such organizations were generally 'imported', legal constructions, based on the western cooperative model but managed and controlled by the colonial administration. The French, for example in Benin and Burkina Faso, constituted the *Sociétés Indigènes de Prévoyance* (SIP) later transformed into *Sociétés Mutuelles de Développement Rural* (SMDR) in the former colonies in West Africa (Chauveau, 1992: pp. 2-5). The English in East Africa promoted and facilitated the creation of primary cooperative societies for products such as coffee, tea and tobacco that received support from specialized civil servants. In both cases the main objective was to improve and organize the supply of agricultural products, while linking up with traditional self-help and communal solidarity practices (Ibid). Some of these societies developed into strong, relatively autonomous organizations, e.g., the Victoria Federation of Co-operatives (for cotton) and the Kilimanjaro Native Co-operative Union (for coffee) in Tanzania; this was always due to farmers' demands for stable and acceptable prices, as well as secure markets (Chilongo, 2005).

After independence, many African states (through their newly established government services or 'parastatals')¹ introduced their own types of farmers' organizations, with or without the support of the former rulers, in order to implement state policies (Diagne and Pesche, 1995). In many parts of Eastern Africa (e.g., Zambia and Tanzania), relatively independent cooperative unions were created and managed under government directives, and were later nationalized (Chilongo, 2005). State-controlled farmers' unions were often used to promote cash crop production for

export, as an important source of hard currency for the newly independent states. During this period, farmers began to consider these types of farmers' organizations and cooperatives as an extension of the public sector rather than as their own. This explains some of the problems that emerged later in terms of members' affiliation, autonomy, sustainability and ownership of activities undertaken by farmers' organizations (Bosc *et al.*, 2002). Later, many development projects and NGOs also created their own farmers' organizations to constitute an interface between the farmers and themselves, and henceforth facilitate the implementation of the particular activities that they supported. Such projects and organizations often focused on aspects other than specific agricultural products and thus on producers and groups that were not represented in cash crop producer organizations. Besides economic objectives, these other new organizations also had broader community development functions (Diagne and Pesche, 1995).

A great diversity of farmers' organizations

The present situation of a highly diverse picture of farmers' organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa is the result of some recent upheavals, such as the withdrawal of the state from many services, privatization, democratization, liberalization and international dynamics, and the influence of donors on national policy-making (Bosc *et al.*, 2002). As part of these liberalization policies, the state-controlled producer organizations and cooperative unions were reformed, made responsible for their own management and often privatized. Increasing private-sector involvement in the agricultural sector led to the creation of 'outgrowers' associations',² often at the initiative of private enterprises. In the mainstream of political democratization, farmers also created their own organizations (e.g., federations, syndicates, etc.) to lobby for and defend their interests at national and provincial levels (see for example the cotton producers' union in Mali; Docking, 2005). In many countries these farmer-led initiatives for new types of farmers' organizations were supported by development cooperation donors and agencies.

The emerging context also shapes the process through which farmers' organizations evolve. More importantly, the context determines the way in which the needs of individuals or households can be fulfilled; either through individual or collective action by joining a farmers' organization (Bosc *et al.*, 2003). The diversity of farmers' organizations is thus explained by several factors such as:

1. origin;
2. legal status;
3. membership base;
4. functions, purposes and services provided; and,
5. scale and level of operations (Ibid).

Origin

This first paragraph of this chapter briefly sketches the history of farmers' organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa. This history already identifies a few possible initiating conditions or establishing entities, such as: a situation where social tradition forms the origin and the organization is set up by farmers themselves to address constraints or exploit opportunities; the state or parastatals; the private sector; NGOs and/or development cooperation agencies; or organizations evolving from farmer groups such as Farmer Field Schools (FFSs), Natural Resource Management Committees (NRMCS) or other 'experiential learning approaches'.

Farmers' organizations can emerge due to farmer-felt needs such as: a need to share local resources (land, labour, water, etc.), market pressures (prices and access to markets), access services (credit, input supply, advisory services, etc.) or for purely social reasons (social security, food security, etc.). In all these cases, there has to be a clear advantage in taking a particular collective action in order to be sustainable; this is often apparent when a need disappears at the end of a particular 'project'.

Legal status

Community-based organizations and common-interest farmer groups can often be either formal or informal, while associations, societies, cooperatives, unions and federations are normally only formal organizations (AgroEco, 2006). Formal groups are registered with the relevant authorities, formed under specific legislation and audited on an annual basis by the government authorities, and under certain conditions, governments can cancel the registration. Formal organizations, particularly the larger ones, have a professional management team, whilst this is lacking in most informal groups. Larger formal groups generally engage in structured activities related to their objectives and create by-laws or a constitution, whilst informal groups can often be more flexible and engage in unstructured self-help activities, without a (written or verbal) code of conduct. Formal groups often belong to a local, national or international network, whilst networks amongst informal groups are limited (Ibid).

Membership base

Farmers often organize (or are being organized) according to the commercial commodities they produce: e.g., coffee, rice, cotton, cashew or cocoa. Such organizations usually group large-scale, agribusiness-like farms with commodity-oriented smallholders. 'Family farms' form a very large group among the members of farmers' organizations because this is the way agriculture is generally organized in Africa: there is a strong link between economic activities and the family structure, its wealth and

labour resources (Bosc *et al.*, 2003). However, for many farm families it does not make sense to focus on only one crop or dimension of their enterprise. It is the combination of different crops and key strategies that explains the complexity of their farming system and groups can be organized accordingly.

Functions, purposes and services provided

Another way often used to distinguish between farmers' organizations is according to their functions, purposes and the related services provided. The simplest defines three categories of functions:

1. service provision;
2. advocacy and lobbying; and,
3. communication and coordination (adapted from Collion and Rondot, 1998).

However, some farmers' organizations take a more activist and political position, as has often been the case in Latin America and also in pre-independence Africa (Bebbington and Thompson, 2004; Chilongo, 2005).

Scale and level of operations

Farmers' organizations can link and unite at levels other than local ones, and can form unions, federations, networks etc. Two pathways for farmers' organizations to unite are encountered most in Sub-Saharan Africa. In the first scenario, farmers' organizations integrate at different levels around a given commodity (e.g., cotton) with specialized functions and services at each level. The local level handles the logistics for input supply and product marketing; the provincial level provides technical and management support to the local groups; and the national level is involved in policy-making and negotiations about the enabling environment, such as price setting for inputs and products, as well as government taxes and subsidies. The processes and approaches followed have often been encouraged by governments and donors as part of the privatization process and withdrawal by the state from supporting functions. A second trajectory is the one followed by federations, networks etc. that are successful in defending the farmers' causes and mobilizing resources for projects. Their successes attract organizations that want to become affiliated in order to gain perceived benefits (Bosc *et al.*, 2002).

Typology of African farmers' organizations

Farmers' organizations can be classified into groups that may eventually provide a basis for a typology. Classification is a means to distinguish and describe different farmers' organizations with the aid of one or more criteria, for example female, male and mixed organizations, or managing a cereal bank, irrigation scheme etc.

A typology goes one step further and aims to analyze the dynamics of farmers' organizations as organized entities within a given context, which subsequently allows for designing strategies for further intervention. Typologies are meant to accompany processes, and hence a typology is not a 'fixed state' but an instrument with which to understand and analyze organizations, for example when designing support programmes (Pesche, 2001).³

Common criteria for classifying and/or establishing a typology of farmers' organizations are related to the factors discussed above (for a summary see Table 3). The growing attention and interest in farmers' organizations over the last decade has also led us to approach them from a perspective of institutional development and organizational strengthening, with tools that are being used in civil society or the third sector (e.g., NGOs and community-based organizations). For example, assessment tools allow for monitoring capacity-strengthening trajectories and the development of social capital (Gubbels and Koss, 2000). The priorities defined in these areas, whether they were explicit or implicit, have consequences for the future position of farmers' organizations. For example, human resource development in village cooperatives for developing commodity sectors (coffee, cacao or cotton) by parastatals, was mainly aimed at improving the logistics for input supply and providing a reliable supply of products. This largely explains their current focus and ties with the private sector, as well as the social capital that they have built up (Bingen *et al.*, 2003).

Although these criteria (Table 3) are useful when aiming to elaborate a typology of farmers' organizations, one has to take certain precautions:

- Each of the criteria is just one facet of an organization's identity, which in turn reflects the society and livelihoods of its members. Several criteria need to be used together in order to grasp the complexity of farmers' organizations.
- A 'simple' application of the criteria produces a rather static picture of farmers' organizations. Its evolution and dynamics as an organizational entity, within a given context and compared to similar organizations, are much more interesting. For this purpose, a 'scale of values' for the various variables may help to comprehend the development trajectories of farmers' organizations (e.g., homogenization or diversification of the membership; specializing or generalizing through its functions; scaling-up or scaling-down of operations).

Farmers' organizations as interfaces

Today's farmers' organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa are often hybrid organizations (and difficult to distinguish from NGOs) through their variety in status, missions, membership-bases and financial sources for functioning. So, numerous farmers are currently members of more than one farmers' organization in order to have, through

Table 3: Examples of the most common criteria for classifying farmers' organizations

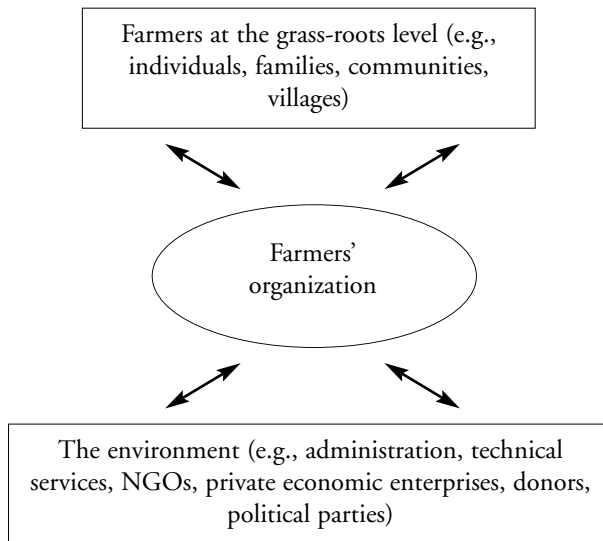
Criteria	Variables
Origin	As an autonomous organization in reaction to constraints or opportunities; emerging from the local community. As an organization created by outside interventions: (a) the state or parastatals; (b) the private sector; and/or (c) NGOs and development cooperation agencies.
Formal and legal status	Not registered with the relevant authorities. Registered under various legislation and facilitated by the relevant authorities: (a) 'association' with the Ministry of Home Affairs; (b) 'cooperative' with the Ministry of Agriculture or cooperative organizations; or (c) 'union' with the Ministry of Labour.
Membership base	On a sub-national basis; related to an administrative entity. On the basis of farm size and market orientation: (a) large-scale, agribusiness farmers; (b) small-scale, commodity farmers; and/or (c) subsistence-oriented, family farms. On the basis of farming systems: (a) agriculturalists; and/or (b) livestock keepers; or (c) mixed farming. On the basis of social groups (i.e., gender): (a) one specific group; or (b) a mix of groups.
Functions, purposes and services provided	Functions: (a) economic; (b) social; (c) representation, such as defending interests, lobbying and advocacy; (d) communication, sharing of information and capacity building; and/or (e) coordination. Purpose: (a) single purpose, specialized in one commodity, activity or sector; or (b) multi-purpose. Services provided to members: (a) input supply; (b) marketing of products; (c) access to new technologies; and/or (d) technical and management training.
Scale and level of operations	Levels: (a) village/district; (b) province; (c) national; and/or (d) international.
Organizational structuring, governance and management procedures	Very few, or no, organizational structures and/or documented procedures for governance and management. Emergence of functioning, organizational structures and respected, documented procedures to enhance good governance and management. Complete organizational functioning, with a set of documented procedures that are being respected.

Sources: adapted from Beaudoux and Nieuwkerk, 1985; Bebbington and Thompson, 2004; Bosc *et al.*, 2003; Gubbels and Koss, 2000; Pesche, 2001; and Messer and Townsley, 2003.

collective action, access to resources and services provided by the organizations or third parties.

Another, more practical reason for such multi-membership is that many farmers cultivate more than one crop, whereas farmers' organizations often focus on only one commodity. In other cases, farmer leaders have gained legitimacy towards other organizations and, more importantly, have developed networks and skills to mobilize resources, for example from development cooperation agencies. Their organizations have often become successful intermediaries between farmers and other stakeholders in the development cooperation sector. Farmers' organizations therefore operate as the interface between the farmers at village level and their overall environment (Roesch, 2004: see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Farmers' organizations at the interface between local and global society



If an external stakeholder measures the efficacy and performance of a farmers' organization, an important criterion will be the degree to which the organization can initiate change at the grass-roots level (Ibid). When the farmers' organization is created by the local society, the organization generally aims at serving to influence its environment and often constitutes a negotiation force.

However, in many cases the external actors are dominant and farmers' organizations are encouraged to adapt to their environment. Examples are the many 'learning platforms' that have emerged, such as groups that develop a technology together or learn about crop and pest management (e.g., FFSs) or other platforms for experiential

learning. Under the influence of outside partners, when attempting to institutionalize or scale-out their approach, such groups often transit into more structuralized entities (Gallagher, 2001).

It is often the role of the group leader to find a balance between adapting to the environment and satisfying the needs of members, while keeping in mind sustainability (in terms of genuine grass-roots support and access to financial resources). Farmers' organizations are continuously adapting because:

1. they have to adjust to the environment;
2. their role at grass-roots level changes; and,
3. the roles of the farmers within their organizations change (Roesch, 2004).

This also explains why farmers' organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa often fulfil multiple functions and pursue several purposes at the same time, which seem difficult to combine. This means that perceptions by the stakeholders involved need to be taken into account, since farmers' organizations present different goals and means for different stakeholders (Chirwa *et al.*, 2005).

Notes

- 1 Parastatal companies are enterprises or organizations that are wholly or partially owned by the state. Although they may have a certain autonomy in management, the government defines the composition of the supervisory board and policy guidelines.
- 2 Outgrowing is a form of contract farming: farmers produce certain products on their own land under a contract with a processor or trader who guarantees the purchase of these products, which have to meet predefined standards.
- 3 In general, a farmers' organization can play more than one role for its members. Pesche (2001) stresses that roles or functions are probably not a useful base for a typology because an organization's activities are just one facet of its identity.

3 Analytical framework

Analyzing the role of farmers' organizations in enhancing social inclusion in the access to agricultural services requires an understanding of the way in which farmers are organized, and the mechanisms for social exclusion of agricultural services provision. In this context social inclusion hindrances refer to:

1. lack of assets (resources, social relations etc.); and
2. institutionalized barriers to access services (see Chapter 1).

Social inclusion hindrances may restrict farmers from becoming members of an organization and hence having less access to services. For example, Silver (2004) admits that the Hoima District Farmers' Association (in the north of Togo) does not work with the 'poorest of the poor', even though his organization intends to do so. The farmers he works with are the ones who can pay their annual subscription fees: 'The farmers we deal with can afford to buy bicycles, radios, have semi-permanent and permanent houses, and some are market-oriented, thus producing targeting the markets. They produce from an average minimum acreage of half a hectare, which are not the very poor in Togo'. However, it is often the Sub-Saharan African women who are 'the poorest of the poor' and these are excluded. Although they play an important role in agriculture, their role is not always fully acknowledged. In addition, they are often submitted to 'traditional' institutions (e.g., power relations and land tenure), which may lead to their marginalization within rural society, with no access to services and no opportunity to join farmers' organizations (FAO, 2007).

These same hindrances may hamper certain groups to fully exercise their rights as members, by freely expressing their needs, being elected as a leader or accessing services provided by the organization or third parties. Examples of such groups include groups of women, farmers without their own land, distressed households (HIV/AIDS, malaria etc.) or ethnic minorities. Criteria and rules, whether formal or informal, may exclude certain member groups from being represented or fully participating in a farmer's associative, democratic life. The composition of the

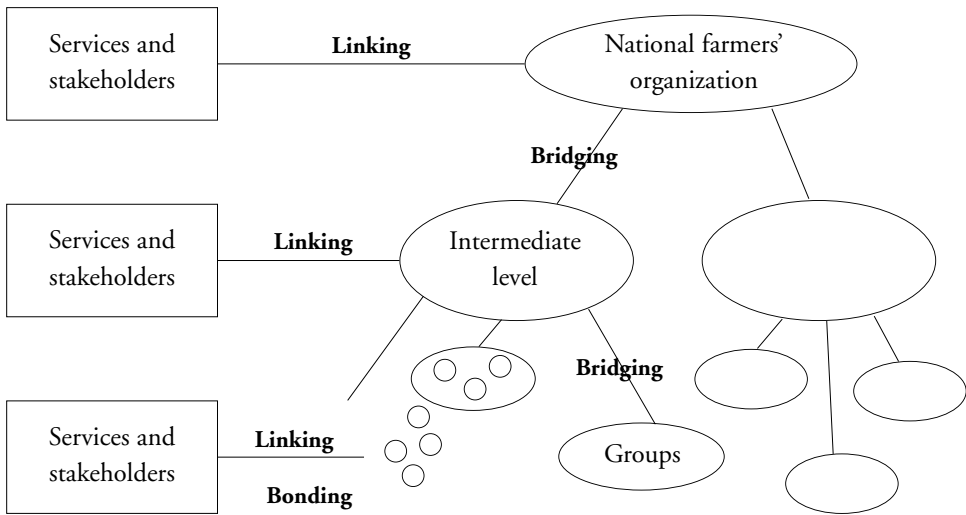
governing and administrative bodies, and the mechanisms involved, are also a reflection of the role of farmer members within the organization. Furthermore, communication between members, leaders and staff (particularly member participation in policy and strategic decision-making) may be more difficult in larger organizations with several organizational tiers. The representative function of a farmers' organization, to which many service providers refer when seeking to collaborate for reasons of effectiveness and efficiency (i.e., 'economy of scale'), also raises the question of whether the organization represents only farmer members or also non-members within the sector or area.

As previously mentioned, the main drive for farmers to organize themselves is that collective action, rather than individual action, provides a better opportunity to gain a suitable response to their needs (Bosc *et al.*, 2003). Trust, reciprocity, cooperation and communication are therefore crucial, since they allow for collective action and lowering of 'transaction costs' in situations where formal contract development and enforcement is difficult (Grootaert and Van Bastelaer, 2002). The ties within a farmer group ('bonding social capital' of associations, cooperatives etc.) may be enhanced beyond a given group and may include other farmer groups ('bridging social capital' of unions, federations etc.) to develop collective action at other levels or in other areas. Finally, farmers' organizations may develop relationships with government authorities, as well as public and private service providers, in order to influence decision-making towards the well-being of their members ('linking social capital'). Figure 3 presents the different forms of social capital. This is why social capital is considered a crucial asset in improving the livelihood system and hence to overcome social exclusion in access to services. However, strong social capital is not a guarantee of social inclusion, since norms within an organization may still hamper certain groups (such as women farmers or minority ethnic groups) from accessing services (Ibid.).

The various elements that have been mentioned above (membership, gender, representativeness and farmers' roles, and social capital) affect the role of farmers' organizations in service provision. Services, including capacity strengthening, can be; either self-provided or provided by third parties; and either to their members only or to the community as a whole. Yet, the inclusive character of services also depends on the service providers themselves and is often the result of a continuous interaction (see Table 2). The role of farmers' organizations in this interaction can be threefold, i.e., to:

1. persuade services to listen to the poor and vulnerable among their members and non-members, and facilitate the voicing of these groups;
2. influence the agenda of services (e.g., setting priorities for research and extension); and,
3. provide and supply these services on a joint basis or by themselves.

Figure 3: Bonding, bridging and linking social capital



The general considerations listed above lead up to an analytical framework based around six main topics:

1. membership of the farmers' organization;
2. gender;
3. social capital;
4. representativeness of the organization;
5. the role of farmers within the organization; and
6. the role of farmers' organizations in accessing service provision.

Table 4 shows the key issues for each of these topics. This Table also presents the dimensions of social inclusion (see Table 1) and the links with criteria for typifying farmers' organizations (see Table 3). Knowledge of the main characteristics of a farmers' organization, according to these criteria, is considered to be a prerequisite for understanding their role in enhancing socially inclusive service provision.

The results from applying the framework to data and information gathered through case studies permits:

- Identification of internal factors (organizational weaknesses and strengths) and external factors (context-related opportunities and threats) that influence social exclusion and inclusion.
- Assessment of the role played by farmers' organizations in accessing services for their members, non-members and the poorest among them.
- The proposal of changes for facilitating access to services for the poor.

Table 4: An analytical framework for the role of farmers' organizations (FO) in enhancing socially inclusive service provision

Criteria for typifying an FO^{a)}	Topics	Issues for social inclusion	Dimensions^{b)}
Origin Membership base	Membership	Number of members Activities of members Criteria (formal and informal) to become a member Costs and benefits of membership	Cultural Political
	Gender	Mechanisms for excluding female members Strategies for including female members	
Purposes, functions and services Scale and level of operations Formal and legal status	Role of the FO in service provision	Role of the FO in accessing services Role of the FO in enhancing access to services for the poorest (members and non-members) Strategies of service providers for enhancing access for the poorest	Economic Functional Physical Relational Structural
	Social capital	Bonding and bridging capital Linking capital	
Organizational structuring, governance and management procedures	Role of farmer members	Composition of governing bodies Mechanisms for constituting governing bodies Role of the poorest in leadership	Participatory
	Representativeness	Meaning of the FO for non-members Downward and upward links	

^{a)} The main criteria that are relevant (see Table 3).

^{b)} The main dimensions of the 'inclusion lens' concerned (see Table 1).

4 Methodology of case studies

The comparative analysis of the case studies aims to:

1. investigate the current role of farmers' organizations in facilitating access of the poorest to agricultural services; and
2. identify the conditions under which farmers' organizations can enhance social inclusion.

Farmers' organizations were selected according to the following criteria:

1. origin and membership base, to include both commodity-based organizations and network-based organizations;
2. originating from countries in both Eastern and Western Africa; and,
3. having a 'partnership' with KIT (this allowed for more easily and rapid access to information sources, also involving leaders and members in debates concerning social inclusion).

The cases concern:

1. KILICAFE (the Association of Kilimanjaro Specialty Coffee Growers) in Tanzania;
2. UCPC (three District Unions of Cotton Producers) in Benin;
3. ACooBéPA (the Association of Cashew Growers' Cooperatives in Benin);
4. MVIWATA (the Network of Tanzanian Farmer Groups) in Tanzania;
5. INGABO (the Union of Farmers and Livestock Keepers) in Rwanda.

Three of the five cases concern organizations that were also involved in earlier case studies and action research (see Heemskerk and Wennink, 2005; Wennink and Heemskerk, 2006).

The cases studies were conducted in 2005 by staff members from the farmers' organizations involved (Tanzania), from partner organizations of the farmers' organization (Rwanda), or by associated researchers (Benin). KIT researchers elaborated the terms of reference and checklists for the case studies and provided

feedback during the fieldwork and reporting. The first case study results were presented during workshops with leaders and members (Tanzania and Rwanda) or submitted as reports to leaders for feedback (Benin).

In all cases, several methods of collecting data and information were employed, such as: desk study of policy documents, membership records, and activity reports; semi-structured interviews with members and leaders; and focus group discussions with small groups of members, leaders and staff. The researchers ensured triangulation of methods to obtain the same information or contact stakeholders, to check whether different stakeholders had the same, or differing opinions, on issues. However, qualitative data rather than quantitative data was gathered during the case studies, and gaps were filled through additional desk studies by all researchers involved.

The results presented in the case study reports were analyzed according to the framework shown in Table 4. This allowed researchers to compare the different situations and draw conclusions on the role of farmers' organizations and social inclusion in providing agricultural services (see Chapter 5).

Each case study (see Part II) presents information on:

- The situation in the country with regard to farmers' organizations, the overall policy and institutional context, and agricultural service providers; the farmers' organization, its origin and basic characteristics, such as status, organizational set up and areas of intervention.
- The main elements of social inclusion (membership base, gender, social capital, representation and participation of farmer members, plus the role of the organization in accessing services for the poor); the key issues involved; plus the authors' conclusions on the level of inclusion of the farmers' organizations in relation to access to services by the poorest.

5 Farmers' organizations and social inclusive service provision

Types of farmers' organizations

This bulletin focuses on the role that farmers' organizations play in enhancing the poorest farmers' access to services such as research, training, advice and extension. We assume that greater access by the poorest farmers to services improves their innovative capacities and thus their livelihoods. However, before we can engage in this discussion we need to know what types of farmers' organizations were studied in the cases selected (see Part II). An overview of the characteristics of each farmers' organization studied is shown in Tables 5a, 5b and 5c.

The cases studied concern three commodity-based organizations (i.e., cashew, coffee and cotton) and two more general networks for farmer groups. However, one of these is also actively involved in organizing members among cash crop farmers, as a way to improve members' incomes and reinforce the resource base of the network (i.e., INGABO, which helps to organize cassava growers).

In the case of commodity organizations, the organizational levels follow the logic of the supply chain, whereas networks seem to follow the formal administrative entities within a country. All the organizations received outside support to help them get established. However, in some cases the initiative clearly came from the donor (e.g., ACooBéPA) whereas, in other cases, external agencies provided support (e.g., MVIWATA, which originally emerged in collaboration with the local university; and INGABO, which is a member of a network of farmers' organizations and national NGOs). Therefore INGABO, KILICAFE and MVIWATA can be typified as farmer-led movements, whilst ACooBéPA and UCPC seem more 'outside' initiatives, with support from donor-funded projects (ACooBéPA) or state services (UCPC). This difference in establishment has a huge impact on the degree of ownership amongst beneficiaries.

It goes without saying that laws and regulations on legal status have an enormous effect on the potential impact of farmers' organizations. In some cases each level of the organization has a different legal status. So, local level groups can be either associations or cooperatives with a fairly informal nature and anchored in more traditional community-based organizations (e.g., INGABO). National and sub-national farmers' organizations are often registered under specific legislation, facilitated by the Ministry of Agriculture, Cooperatives, Labour or Commerce (e.g., KILICAFE, as a limited company, and INGABO as a union). In many cases such legislation has not been adapted to encompass the specific situations and requirements of farmers' organizations.

With respect to the mission statements of the farmers' organizations, we note that few explicitly mention poverty alleviation goals or inclusion issues. This is particularly the case for commodity-based organizations: access to markets and a reasonable share of market prices are considered crucial to improving the income of all members. Crop growing, as a membership criterion, without any distinction between farm sizes, is seen as a prerequisite for equal access by members to services provided. The network organizations generally focus explicitly on smallholders.

With the exception of ACooBéPA, which covers two districts, all other farmers' organizations have quite a large coverage area and consequently have several organizational layers while also operating at these levels. Organizational functioning is clearly a question of time (age) and experience in developing and establishing the necessary structures and procedures at the different levels. Voicing grass roots opinions remains a continuous challenge. The functionality of farmers' organizations depends on the level in their hierarchy: for example, organizations participate in price negotiations at the higher levels, while local level groups are concerned with input distribution and the sale of produce. Both INGABO and MVIWATA strive to strengthen service provision at both higher and lower levels (grass roots and members) by developing and concluding 'service contracts'.

Farmers join farmers' organizations for a variety of reasons: whereas farmers often use commodity-based organizations to gain access to markets, inputs or credit facilities, networks are also considered important for general countervailing concerning service providers and in order to gain political clout. We observe that, in addition to the public sector (which has traditionally provided extension services), many farmers' organizations have become increasingly involved in providing technical advice. However, this is not the case in Benin, where the public extension service continues to be paid through cotton levies and hence farmers' organizations do not see the need to also intervene themselves. Also, all farmers' organizations have an increasingly strong economic dimension and market orientation because, in general, national agricultural development policies emphasize value-chain development and market access.

Membership

The preceding chapter discussed the types of farmers' organizations that were analyzed, including their focus (e.g., crops or farming/livestock keeping). Tables 6a and 6b provide an overview of membership characteristics per farmers' organizations studied.

In the case of ACooBéPA, UCPC and KILICAFE, specific groups of farmers (growing a particular crop) can become members. In the case of INGABO, individuals (farmers) are members of the organization and, in turn, these members can also be members of a local farmer group, but this is not a condition for membership of INGABO. In the case of MVIWATA, individuals who are members of a farmer group, the farmer groups as a whole, as well as complete networks of farmers can all become members. It can therefore be concluded that the commodity-based organizations represent groups, whereas the network organizations focus on advocacy and lobbying for more general farmer-related issues, and also represent individual members. The latter type of organization is possibly linked to the more syndicate-like lobbying and advocacy characteristics.

In most cases landownership is a de facto condition for membership, since farming as a means of living or growing a specific crop is the basic criterion, even though in some cases land-user rights are enough. In Benin for example, farmers can be land users and still belong to the village groups that are UCPC members. In Rwanda the criterion of earning most of the household income from farming, in combination with the high land pressure and the importance of off-farm activities, mean that it is usually the landowners who are members of INGABO. Only in the case of MVIWATA are landless farmers specifically mentioned as becoming full-fledged members, if agricultural production is the main component of their livelihoods.

In general, it seems, farmers' organizations do not have a very clear picture of their members (in terms of land property, age, education, religion, ethnicity etc.). There is some knowledge of diversity, but this is not used for targeting and improving service provision to members. It is therefore recommended that farmers' organizations develop such a profile, since this would help to take membership diversity into account. This could also help to verify the extent to which the members of the organization are representative of the entire community.

In all cases members are required to pay entry fees as well as annual fees. The ACooBéPA and UCPC, and their affiliated village groups, also require a social share to constitute a working capital for the cooperatives. Regular payment of membership fees is a recurrent problem and it remains to be seen whether this is due to lack of financial means (e.g., the low incomes of members or financial mismanagement) or

Table 5a: Characteristics of the farmers' organizations (FO) investigated in the case studies

Type of FO	ACooBePA Benin	UCPC Benin	INGABO Rwanda	KILICAFE Tanzania	MVIWATA Tanzania
Origin	Public-private initiative (project) with donor support	Farmer-led, with public sector support (for the cotton parastatal)	Farmer-led, with donor and NGO support	Farmer-led, with private sector and NGO support	Farmer-led, with external (university) support
Trigger	National policy on crop diversification (projects)	Cotton marketing: sector-wide reforms and efforts toward privatization	Lack of infrastructure and services (due to genocide)	Coffee marketing: auction thresholds	Loss of trust in old Cooperative Unions
Legal status	District and local levels: not yet registered as Cooperatives	District and local levels: registered as Cooperatives	Provincial/national level: registered as Union	National level: registered as Limited Company	National level: registered as Trust Fund
			Local level: traditional associations that are not formally registered	Intermediate level: legally as branch offices of KILICAFE	Intermediate level: networks as NGOs
				Local: FBGs as cooperatives or associations	Local: groups as cooperatives or associations
Base	Cashew	Cotton	Farming/Livestock keeping (smallholdings)	Arabica coffee	Farming/smallholder farming
Purpose	Improved prices and service provision	Representation and coordination	Representation and advocacy at national level	Service provision and improved prices	Representation and advocacy at national level
			Service provision at local level	Service provision at local level	Service provision at lower levels

Table 5b: Characteristics of farmers' organizations (FO) investigated in the case studies

Type of FO	ACooBePA Benin	UCPC Benin	INGABO Rwanda	KILICAFE Tanzania	MVIWATA Tanzania
General services	Access to inputs (seeds) and marketing Training and advice for improved production	Access to inputs and marketing Training and advice for improved production Participation in community development	Training and extension services for crop and animal production Access to credit Management support for specialised producer federations	Improved coffee quality and processing Access to markets and credit	Advisory services on lower levels Access to markets and credit
Scale of operation	In 2 out of 112 districts in Benin; 10 wards and 36 villages Heart of the cashew area	In 75 out of 112 districts in Benin Quasi coverage of cotton area	Member groups in one province of Rwanda; in 800 out of 1,097 cells	In 5 out of 25 provinces in Tanzania; 3 medium-sized networks and 102 FBGs	In all 25 provinces of Tanzania; 150 local and medium-sized networks in 80 out of 114 districts; 1,100 FGs
Level of operation	Villages, ward and district	Villages and district Member of provincial and national unions (FUPRO)	Village, district and province Member of a national network (ROPARWA)	Village and intermediate level	Villages, local, intermediate and national
Organizational structuring and governance	Organizational structures defined but not properly functioning Grass roots = weak No regular AGM Assets limited	Organizational structures defined and functioning Strong AGM at district level Grass roots = strong Assets limited	Organizational structures defined and properly functioning Strong AGM at district level Grass roots = strong Assets limited	Organizational structures defined and properly functioning Strong AGM at national and intermediate level Grass roots = weak Assets limited	Strong AGM at national and intermediate level Grass roots = weak Assets limited

Table 5c: Characteristics of the farmers' organizations (FO) investigated in the case studies

Type of FO	ACooBePA Benin	UCPC Benin	INGABO Rwanda	KILICAFE Tanzania	MVIWATA Tanzania
Documented procedures	Not available	Statutes and by-laws, but not up to date Management and financial manuals No MoU	Statutes and by-laws Management and financial manuals MoU (service contracts) under preparation	KILICAFE and FBG Constitution linked through MoU	Constitution Management and financial manuals No MoU

Table 6a: Characteristics of farmers' organization membership

Membership	ACooBePA Benin	UCPC Benin	INGABO Rwanda	KILICAFE Tanzania	MVIWATA Tanzania
Type of members	Smallholder cashew growers (groups)	Smallholder and large holder cotton growers (groups)	Smallholder farmers and livestock holders	Smallholder coffee growers (1-2 hectares)	Smallholder farmers and fishermen
Number of members	546 individual members through 36 village groups and 10 ward associations	Numbers not available Most households (>90%) are members in the cotton area (Kandi) In the other two areas: a minority of households (<50%)	13,000 individual members through 800 groups (an estimated 50% of households)	10,000 members (of 400,000 households producing either Arabica or Robusta)	10,000 individual card holders and 60,000 members through 1,100 groups and 150 networks

Table 6b: Characteristics of farmers' organization membership

Membership	ACooBePA Benin	UCPC Benin	INGABO Rwanda	KILICAFE Tanzania	MVIWATA Tanzania
Formal criteria to become a member	Cashew grower (village group member)	Cotton grower (village group member)	Farming/Livestock keeping Agriculture as main source of income	Coffee producer (FBG member)	Group member and farming as main livelihood
Informal criteria to become a member	Cashew plantation owner	Village groups need to produce 'enough' cotton	Landowners	FBGs need to produce minimum 10 MT coffee	No civil servants or politicians
Costs of membership	Levies on sales (not functional) Social shares (USD 5), annual fees (USD 2) for combined individual membership of village and ward groups	Levies on cotton sales Social shares, entry and annual fees (USD 2) for individuals Contribution to a village group credit and mutual fund (USD 0.5 per member per month)	Entry (USD 2) and annual fees (USD 2) for individuals Contribution to a village group credit and mutual fund (USD 0.5 per member per month)	Payment: 3% of gross coffee sales, USD 25 entry and USD 25 annual fee for FBGs, and USD 2-4 for members	Entry fee and annual fee for individuals (USD 1 and USD 1), groups (USD 2 and USD 10) and networks (annual USD 20)
Benefits of membership (potential)	Village group members: access to inputs (seeds) and markets, and research and extension services	Village group members: access to inputs and markets Representation with local service providers Advocacy and lobbying (FUPRO)	Village group members: access to credit fund and extension services Representation and advocacy with service providers Mobilization of donor support for group activities	Coffee marketing (premium price), and access to FBG assets (processing units) and credit	Group benefits are variable but access to markets and credit Representation, lobbying and advocacy AGM member

other reasons, such as weakly perceived benefits from services provided by the organization to its members. In the commodity-based organizations (such as KILICAFE and UCPC), levies (and rebates) provide revenues to run the farmers' organizations. In the case of UCPC, these levies are destined to reward farmers' organizations for cotton chain operations such as the collection of cotton for marketing. In the case of cotton, the funds generated through levies are influenced by the performance of the entire cotton chain and are therefore highly dependent on world market prices. These are two issues on which the UCPCs apparently lack intelligence and information, as well as the capacity, to intervene.

Both network organizations, MVIWATA and INGABO receive significant amounts of donor funding for various project-related activities. Such donors often aim to alleviate poverty through the projects that they support, and the network organizations (rather than the commodity-based organizations) are therefore more likely to design interventions to fight poverty and enhance social inclusion. Obviously this makes the networks quite vulnerable to donor's conditions and might present a threat to the long-term financial sustainability of the network. INGABO is therefore considering a proposal to split the ROPARWA network into two entities: one to manage donor funds and project implementation, and another to concentrate on advocacy and policy-making. MVIWATA has established a trust fund for several reasons, including to maintain its assets and to become less dependent of external support. However, donor funds, which are often allocated to support poverty-alleviation activities, might also represent an opportunity to address the specific needs of the poorest rural people.

Gender

Social exclusion can be experienced in gendered ways, and gender can ameliorate or exacerbate exclusion or the terms of inclusion (see Beall and Piron, 2005: p. 22). Table 7 shows details of female/male membership levels. For another category of members, the young, unfortunately no data on characteristics and circumstances of members was available, since this did not seem to be a priority among the organizations involved.

As a general trend, fewer women are represented in 'classical' commodity organizations. This is closely linked to the position of women in Sub-Saharan African rural society and their access to, and control of, production factors such as land. The UCPCs in Benin, for example, have hardly any women (less than 30%) who are registered members. Women are not officially refused membership, but informal criteria (such as the quantity of cotton produced) often exclude women, since they usually have the smallest plots. Literacy is also often an asset for those occupying leadership positions, and women are generally less literate. Those networks that

increasingly focus on market access and value-chain development accordingly have a larger percentage of male members.

However, the recent feminization of the agricultural sector (as a result of the HIV-AIDS pandemic and mass exodus searching for labour) has resulted in an increased focus on women. Hence, many organizations now have a set of specific gender-facilitating policies to increase the proportion of women members. On the one hand, this is the result of the aforementioned feminization of the agriculture sector, which underlines the important role played by women, and allows them to actively participate in managing organizations and to voice their needs. On the other hand, donor-supported initiatives to develop skills help women to claim their rights within organizations. In conclusion, commodity-based organizations tend to be rather 'gender-blind' (e.g., KILICAFE) or at least 'gender-unaware' (e.g., UCPC and ACooBéPA), while network organizations are even 'gender-distributive' (e.g., INGABO and MVIWATA) (see MacDonald *et al.*, 1997: p. 52 for models of gender and organizational change). The two network organizations clearly took up the challenge to include women in both membership and leadership roles as a result of developments within rural society, as well as gender sensitization by donors. However, these organizations have apparently taken care to do so at their own pace, and thereby ensure 'ownership' of the issue and to institutionalize gender-specific measures.

Participation and representation of farmers

Once farmers are members of a farmer organization, important issues are the division of functions between members and leaders, as well as the representative character of the organization for different groups of farmers, particular the poorest. Tables 8a and 8b present an overview of these issues for the farmers' organizations that have been studied.

In all commodity organizations large-scale farmers and former (now retired) civil servants have the advantage in gaining leadership positions. This is because, on the one hand, these farmers are motivated to defend the interests of other farmers and are aware of some of the mechanisms that can be used to defend farmers' rights, while on the other hand they can afford to spend some time and money on group interests. Furthermore, the levy system for funding organizational functioning favours large-scale farmers, since they claim more influence because of their financial contribution (e.g., the election of UCPC board members). In the network cases, small-scale farmers have more chances of gaining leadership positions, certainly at the local level – however, it is not clear how often this actually happens. Other important eligibility criteria for leadership positions include communication skills and the candidates' social capital, including links with the local elite and political system. Poorer members are less likely to occupy leadership positions because they are less likely to

Table 7: Gender dimension of farmers' organization membership

Gender	ACooBéPA Benin	UCPC Benin	INGABO Rwanda	KILICAFE Tanzania	MVIWATA Tanzania
Inclusion/exclusion mechanisms for female members	20% female members of village groups Few women in leadership	20% female members of village groups Few women in leadership	60% female members Women in leadership Gender quota strategy	10% female FBG members Few in leadership	18% female members (was 30%; FBGs with higher percentage) 44% in national leadership
Inclusion/exclusion mechanisms for young members	No gender strategy No data	No operational gender strategy No data	No data	No gender strategy No disaggregated data by age FBG members are said to be relatively old	Gender strategy No disaggregated data by age

Table 8a: Role of farmers within the farmers' organization (FO): participation and representation

Farmers role in FO	ACooBéPA Benin	UCPC Benin	INGABO Rwanda	KILICAFE Tanzania	MVIWATA Tanzania
Office composition	Village group committees: smallholders District board: smallholders	Village group committees: smallholders and large-scale farmers District board: large-scale farmers	Village group committees: smallholders Central committee: smallholders and large-scale farmers	FBG management committees, Chapter Committee, and Central Management Team: all smallholders	Smallholders dominate at local level (44% women) Secretariat with appointed staff (only 22% women)
Mechanisms for constituting an office	District Board is elected by AGM	District Board is elected by AGM, and appoints executive board Cotton production and residency weigh in voting	Board of Directors is elected by AGM, and appoints executive directors	Governing Board is elected by AGM, and appoints executive secretariat	Steering Committee is elected by AGM, and appoints executive secretariat Politicians excluded

Table 8b: Role of farmers within the farmers' organization (FO): participation and representation

Farmers role in FO	ACooBePA Benin	UCPC Benin	INGABO Rwanda	KILICAFE Tanzania	MVIWATA Tanzania
Role of the poorest in leadership	Moderate Tendency toward dominance of major ethnic groups	Limited because of (informal) election criteria	Limited, as large-scale farmers are better endowed (for elections) Institutionalized gender strategy led to improvement in leadership roles No landless farmers	Limited, as few households and coffee producers are not the poorest	Few landless farmers Gender strategy led to improvement in leadership roles
FO's meaning to non-members	FO involved in extension services (project-funded and NGO-managed), which are accessible to non-members	Financing of community infrastructure Funding of extension services (cotton levies), also for non-members	Representation, lobbying and advocacy with results (e.g. laws, infrastructure), also for the benefit of non-members	FO can buy coffee from non-members	FO involved in extension, also for non-members
Downward links	Loosely accountable to members (no regular AGM)	Through AGM and rural radio	Through AGM	Strongly accountable to FBGs	Only through AGM
Upward links	Weak because of 'shielding' by project partners	Strong, since cotton is important cash crop	Strong, through networking with other FOs	Accountability of FBGs on coffee quality	Weak presentation of innovation demands by groups
Access to services	Agenda setting of research and extension services by donor-funded projects and NGOs	Funding of agricultural extension and cotton research (cotton levies), and involved in priority setting	Joint activities with agricultural service providers (donor-funded and NGOs)	Member of Tanzania Coffee Research Institute and influences its agenda, coffee processing and quality services	Strong in setting research priorities at national level, although variable Involved in agricultural extension services

be literate, less likely to have time available and generally possess less social capital. In addition, they are not likely to be considered role models (e.g., successful agricultural entrepreneurs who build up social capital) by their peers.

In some cases leadership is hierarchical: a member has to obtain a leadership position at a lower level before becoming eligible to a leadership position at a higher level (i.e., a 'ladder system'). This is the case for the UCPC and ACooBéPA in Benin and INGABO in Rwanda. On the contrary, KILICAFE and MVIWATA encourage separate leadership, so that anyone can aspire to a leadership position. The advantages of a 'ladder system' mean that representativeness is legitimized, and anchored at lower levels of the organization, and leadership capacities are optimized. Ordinary members can also consult 'their own leaders' and, through them, reach the higher layers. However, it also results in a trade-off between quality and transparency. Advantages of an autonomous leadership system include the high degree of transparency, a broader base, capacity building of more individuals and improved accountability. In all cases there is a tendency to form elite leaders, which in itself is not a problem as long as they account for their decisions and members have the countervailing power to control them. Failure of such democratic mechanisms put the social cohesion of the farmers' organization at stake, and annihilates motivation for collective action.

In both the INGABO and MVIWATA cases (organizations originally meant to be for the benefit of all farmers, including the poorest) an increasing focus on marketable commodities is noticed, which may have consequences for participation and representation. In the MVIWATA case it has already been observed that the number of female cardholders is still growing, but not as fast as the overall membership, and thus the proportion of women members is decreasing, which seems to be linked to the focus on marketable commodities.

With respect to the representativeness of the farmers' organizations for non-members, network organizations tend to initiate activities that are beneficial for non-members and include consultations with non-members, through their focus on lobbying, advocacy and collaboration with public-sector service providers and NGOs. Economic services, such as input supply and marketing of products that are provided by commodity organizations, are exclusively for members. However, research and extension services that are undertaken jointly and/or funded by commodity organizations are also accessible to non-members.

Downward links, where the national organizations consult their membership base to guide decision-making, become rarer as the size of the organization increases. This can easily be explained by the size of the group and the distance (also physical) between the different layers within the organization. However, regular consulting is crucial for transparency and accountability within the organization and its social

capital. Lack of transparency creates mistrust in times of crisis and may lead to 'break-away' organizations (e.g., cotton producer organizations in Benin). Another issue at stake in the cotton organizations is the fact that the less cotton produced, the lower the amounts collected in levies, which in turn means that real participation declines. This mechanism risks keeping poor farmers poor and making the rich farmers even richer, and thus more involved in decision-making to their advantage.

FUPRO (the national union of agricultural producers in Benin) and MVIWATA (a network of Tanzanian farmer groups) publish journals for their members: in both cases this is a medium for channelling information from the national level down to the grass-roots level. Other mechanisms to inform the membership include the Annual General Meeting (AGM), which all members can attend, and the use of rural radio. All organizations, except ACooBéPA, organize regular AGMs. UCPC Kandi and Djidja contribute to the funding of the district radio station and, in return, use the radio free of charge to inform its members, which proves to be a very efficient means of communication. Strong grass-roots groups that benefit from regular capacity building are important for upward linking, as shown by the experiences of network organizations such as MVIWATA. Grass-roots groups are more eager to have their voices heard if they are also responsible for managing projects such as the *Gacaca* member groups of INGABO. In well-established commodity supply chains that contribute substantially to national economies, member groups of commodity-based organizations (cotton/UCPC) and coffee/KILICAFE) obtain their voicing capacity from the fact that they directly represent the producers. Their position has been reinforced through the withdrawal of state supervision in these chains while 'well-meant' projects (e.g., support for cashew supply by ACooBéPA) may still hamper grass-roots groups from playing their full role.

Social capital

Social capital can be analytically divided into bonding, bridging and linking social capital (Grootaert and Van Bastelaer, 2002; see also Chapter 3, Figure 3). Table 9 provides an overview of the role played by farmers' organizations in bonding, bridging and linking social capital.

In both the network organizations and commodity-based organizations, in terms of bonding and bridging, social capital is very variable since organization forms differ substantially (see also Chapter 5). The basic motivation for farmers to join groups and for groups to join in larger networks and organizations is the fact that collective action is more effective and profitable than individual undertakings. Trust is thereby the main key, since submitting collective action to all kinds of procedures can make it even less efficient. However, more formal procedures are required at higher levels within an organization, whereas local farmer groups often rely on more traditional, village

community mechanisms for checks and balances (e.g., the INGABO *Gacaca* groups). Operational transparency and accountability mechanisms within farmers' organizations are therefore crucial. The two Benin cases indicate that badly managed collective action (e.g., weak capacity to negotiate collective marketing contracts for raw cashew nuts) and malfunctioning of governance bodies (e.g., embezzlement of cotton funds) put a strain on social capital. Having the required skills to ensure that the core business of an organization actually functions, is another determining factor for building social capital. Well-defined core functions also make targeting 'partner organizations' easier (e.g., INGABO's relationship with faith-based NGOs that have a clear pro-poor focus).

Some years ago the discussion concerning service providers working with farmer organizations focused on whether researchers or extension workers would be more efficient if working with existing groups (traditional or previously established) or if it would be better if they created 'their own' specific organizations. Today it is widely agreed that more and better results can be achieved if existing organizational forms are taken into account as much as possible (Heemskerk and Wennink, 2004). So far, researchers and extension agents have been quite effective in using bonding to gain social capital, for example for setting research priorities, experiential learning (e.g., through Farmer Field Schools) and disseminating information. However, the potentials available, both in terms of bridging and linking, are under-utilized. In some cases resource persons within groups' communities provide precious social capital for more inclusive service provision to members: e.g., INGABO's farmer facilitators play an important role in farmer-to-farmer extension, and ACooBéPA's initiative to use well-skilled community members to enhance contract negotiations.

Commodity-based farmers' organizations have generally inherited an important potential for linking social capital: they link with both chain actors and public sector agricultural service providers (e.g., KILICAFE and UCPC and their links to extension and research). The main drivers to maintain this linking capital are the performance of the value chain and the quality of the products. With both coffee and cotton, the quality of the final product is taken into account when fixing prices. Network organizations, which focus on lobbying and advocacy, often have to build up their linking capital. They have to 'prove' that they are trustworthy partners, either by representing an important number of members (e.g., MVIWATA) or contributing to services that perform better (e.g., combating the cassava mosaic virus with the help of INGABO members). Network organizations link up mainly with local government, other public sector stakeholders and NGOs.

Farmers' organizations and service provision

The role of farmers' organizations in service provision, and particularly the pro-poor focus of services provided, is strongly determined by both external and internal

Table 9: Role of farmers' organizations in bonding, bridging and linking social capital

Social capital	ACooBePA Benin	UCPC Benin	INGABO Rwanda	KILICAFE Tanzania	MVIWATA Tanzania
Bonding	Strong village producer groups, exploring and realizing marketing opportunities	Strong village producer groups, registered and crucial for access to inputs and credits	Strong grass-roots institutions, involved in project management	Strong FBGs, registered in and essential for central pulping unit	Quality of FGs variable depending on origin Leadership training
Bridging	Relatively weak Lack of adequate facilities for cooperatives	Relatively strong Centrally organized and coordinated cotton chain	Relatively strong Central level, mobilizing resources for village groups	National and Chapters supporting FBGs	Relatively strong at National and intermediate level Inventories for Farmer Fora
Linking	Relatively weak Relations with service providers managed by project and NGOs	Strong, with chain actors and public sector services	Relatively strong at the district level (joint service provision), and central level (through ROPARWA membership)	Strong, with chain stakeholders; less with public sector services	Increasing at national and entrant levels, but weak locally

Table 10: Factors influencing exclusion/inclusion in service provision for innovation

SWOT analysis	ACooBePA Benin	UCPC Benin	INGABO Rwanda	KILICAFE Tanzania	MVIWATA Tanzania
Strengths	Small grass-roots membership (trust and affinity) Well-trained membership	Consolidated funding mechanism for all levels Well-trained staff Participation in community development	Grass-roots and intermediate levels participate in service provision Member of national network	Good governance: strong FBGs and leadership Links with research	FGs involved in innovation for market access Lobbying at intermediate and national level
Weaknesses	Weak collective negotiating capacities Little information on markets	Institutionalization of informal eligibility criteria (e.g. cotton production) Lack of transparency in resource allocation	Weak financial sustainability of farmer-to-farmer extension services	Poor gender situation Investment constraints	Poor links at group level Poor demand articulation by groups
Opportunities	Emerging value chain with national policy support Special cashew research programme and entity	Part of a larger established network Links with research and extension at all levels	Links with local authorities and service providers Partnerships with NGOs that have an explicit pro-poor focus	Quality innovation for specialty coffee markets	Farmer Fora at ward and district level for innovation demand
Threats	Agenda setting by donors/projects Lack of appropriate credit facilities	Poor sector governance Declining prices without a clear 'diversification' policy	Donor dependency (financial autonomy) Professionalization of the sector/organization	No pro-poor innovations: labour, (HIV/AIDS) etc. Low external input	FGs weak without demands; efforts do not lead to bridging and empowerment

Table 11: Role of farmers' organizations (FO) and access to research, advisory and training services

Role of FO	ACooB&PA Benin	UCPC Benin	INGABO Rwanda	KILICAFE Tanzania	MVIWATA Tanzania
Accessing services for members	Joint training and extension services nurseries and planting) with projects	Main representative for public sector research and extension services Funding of research and extension (cotton levies)	Farmer-led credit facilities at the grass-roots level Farmer-to-farmer extension at local level	Coffee quality innovation and FBG organization	Lobbying for market projects at national level Lobbying for advice and training at local level
Accessing services for poorest members	Smallholder cashew growers benefit from group training	Smallholder cotton growers benefit from larger farmers (group training)	Selecting farmer extensionists among members Pro-poor projects (donor supported)	Very small coffee producers benefit from larger ones	Increasing role in advisory services for women and HIV/AIDS affected families
Accessing services for non-members	Nurseries are accessible for non-members	Contribution to community infrastructure	Lobbying and advocacy	Lobbying with research for coffee nurseries	Lobbying and advocacy Contracted service provision

factors. Table 10 presents an extract from the different SWOT analyses; these are the key factors that influence service provision (indirectly by third parties) or (directly) by farmers' organizations.

The more internal factors that are related to the organizations themselves include:

1. inclusive eligibility criteria for representing categories of members at levels or platforms where decision-making on service provision is taking place;
2. capacity strengthening and skill development of both the members and staff for adequately voicing of needs and planning services;
3. financial resources and a certain level of financial autonomy as a leverage mechanism for orienting and providing services;
4. building social capital for collective action by members and member organizations, and joint action with service providers.

However, external factors are also important, and these include:

1. national policies for diversifying commodity crops (e.g., niche and speciality markets for cashew and coffee);
2. institutions for voicing farmers' needs (e.g., local farmer fora for priority setting in service delivery);
3. decentralization of agricultural research and extension services;
4. availability of technologies for the poorest.

Farmers' organizations are increasingly taking over services and, as such, provide services to the overall farmer community (both to members and non-members). This tendency is enhanced by overall processes that are going on in the three countries: state withdrawal from providing goods and services, including agricultural extension; decentralization of governance and deconcentration of services; and the lack of funding of public sector services, which forces them to explore new funding mechanisms such as cost-sharing and outsourcing (see Heemskerk and Wennink, 2005). Table 10 presents an overview of the role played by farmers' organizations in service provision. The overall picture shows that farmers' organizations and service providers increasingly work together as a result of public funding constraints and the desire by service providers to gain an 'economy of scale'. However farmers' organizations, particularly network organizations, lobby for 'pulling down' services or start organizing service provision themselves. This offers opportunities for more inclusive and pro-poor services (e.g., 'farmer-led' initiatives, where farmers are involved in all stages of service provision and delivery: targeting services, selecting service workers, and assessing the quality of services).

State withdrawal and decentralization provide farmers' organizations with opportunities but also with challenges. A first challenge is to provide services on a sustainable basis. INGABO's experiences in this field illustrate both the successes (in

terms of coverage and reach of different farmer households) and risks (sustainable financing farmer extension services) involved. A second challenge is the need to link up with other knowledge services and sources, because a globalized context and demanding markets require up-to-date information for innovation. Commodity-based organizations, such as KILICAFE and UCPC, therefore still rely on established specialized research organizations. The way in which demands for services are identified and presented, and knowledge and information are disseminated by the farmers' organization, are crucial. Involving local level groups is therefore essential (e.g., MVIWATA farmer groups) since they have first-hand knowledge of diversity. Although UCPC Benin still very much assumes that knowledge and innovation will eventually diffuse through to all farmers by training the leaders, MVIWATA includes more farmers in training and extension activities.

However, the inclusive character of services provided by research and extension also depends on:

1. the policy context, which may commit service providers to poverty alleviation and a consequent operational strategy;
2. the institutional set up (e.g., level of decentralization of these services);
3. the organizational capacity (e.g., network of agents); and working methods (e.g., participatory approaches).

We notice that the more private funding that is involved (e.g., through commodity levies or services provided by private enterprises), the more the services are exclusively targeted towards members. The involvement of the public sector in service provision and more community-development-related purposes (e.g., UCPC funding of infrastructure in Benin) seems to be a guarantee for reaching far beyond just the members of a farmers' organization.

6 Concluding remarks: towards a strategy for social inclusion

A need for continuous interaction between agricultural service providers and farmers' organizations

In order to achieve sustainable rural development for the benefit of all categories of rural households, from the poorest to the richer (as well as for all members of these households), the identification of opportunities for viable development is a first requirement. From an innovation perspective, agricultural research and advisory services play an important role in this. Therefore, inclusive access to these services by all referred categories, as well as openness by these services towards the poorest, is therefore central to achieving rapid and sustainable rural development.

The case studies demonstrate the need for a continuous interaction between agricultural service providers and farmers' organizations. This would also allow farmers' organizations to better articulate inclusive demands for which building social capital is an essential condition.

In order to improve access to knowledge services, which is expected to enhance the likelihood that farmers can make use of the opportunities identified, socially inclusive research and advisory services must be available. Different kinds of farmers and categories of households need to be listened to by service providers, in order for their priorities and needs to be included in the development and service agenda, and for the required services to be made widely available as real public goods. This is a continuous and enormous challenge for the research and advisory services systems with which the public, private and 'third' sectors need to interact.

Key roles for farmers' organizations in inclusive innovation systems

Farmers' organizations can play four roles in the pro-poor orientation of services by:

1. lobbying for an enabling policy and institutional environment;

2. facilitating the voice of the poorest and other vulnerable groups to be heard;
3. exercising influence on advancing socially inclusive research and advisory service agendas; and,
4. becoming involved in the implementation of research and advisory services for the poorest and the most vulnerable.

Farmers' organizations can do this on the basis of their mandate for advocacy for the rural poor in general, but also based on the voice of their own constituencies and members. The central questions then are two-fold:

1. do the present types of farmers' organizations have the capacity to strengthen the voice of the poor and actually influence the agenda setting for all categories of households? and
2. do farmers' organizations have the capacity to get involved in service provision, on their own initiative or through contracts with the public (primarily) and private sectors?

The results from both the case studies conducted and the analysis provide us with some strategic elements for capacity strengthening of farmers' organizations for socially inclusive service provision. One of the main conclusions is that farmers' organizations can indeed play strong advocacy and service provider roles, but that a number of conditions need to be met. These conditions mainly relate to capacity development of the farmers organizations at different levels in articulating their needs and demands, and building social capital.

Capacity strengthening of farmers' organizations: articulating inclusive demands

Farmers' organizations, which are primarily involved in production and processing, are central in agricultural innovation. They therefore require capacity development for:

- learning-by-doing and learning-by-interaction. These are key elements in order to strengthen socially inclusive service provision for new technologies and practices.
- enhancing the level of inclusion enhancement for different types of services. However, experiences indicate that this relates to the type of knowledge offered as well as the degree to which the service is considered a public good. The level of cost-sharing of the services provided can also lead to exclusion.
- monitoring of the social inclusiveness of agricultural innovation. In terms (again) of interaction with others, strong performance indicators need to be developed: performance by the actors, their functions and their interaction, as well as with regard to policy-making for socially inclusive and hence sustainable development (see for the agricultural innovation system concept: Wennink and Heemskerk, 2006: pp. 32 and 43-44).

Furthermore, farmers' organizations can undertake specific actions as member-based and member-led organizations:

- Farmers' organizations can develop special programmes to enhance equal opportunities for members to become involved in leadership (at group and higher levels) through skill development and 'learning-by-doing'.
- Farmers' organizations require (and some already have), internal and external policies to advance the interests of women, young members and other vulnerable groups, such as people affected by HIV/AIDS, and specifically on mainstreaming such groups in service provision for innovation development.
- Farmers' organizations can develop their own gender strategies, without leaning towards window-dressing for donors. Gender involves changing cultural values and organizational strategies that help define favourable criteria for access to services and opportunities for women to express their voice.
- Farmers' organizations need to define criteria for the regular elaboration of membership profiles. This will allow the farmers' organization to develop strategies to include special target groups such as young members, households headed by women, HIV/AIDS-affected households, herdsmen, minority ethnic groups etc. More particularly, it allows them to generate innovation-development priorities for each member category and to articulate these accordingly.
- With respect to commodity-based organizations, product quality and related price incentives (instead of bulk quantities) provide an excellent opportunity for poorer farmers to gain a market share and improve their incomes.

Capacity strengthening of farmers' organizations: building social capital

Farmers' organizations that are involved in production and processing are central to agricultural innovation. They therefore require capacity development for the three dimensions of their social capital: bonding, bridging and linking – also in relation to the interaction with all key stakeholders.

Farmers' organizations are most likely to have a socially inclusive membership through strong grass-roots groups. Inclusiveness can be further enhanced through a concentration on more (but not necessarily inclusive) socially mixed groups. Socially mixed groups can exist not only in relation to gender, but also in terms of poverty categories e.g., small and larger farmers in one group, or group member households overcoming stigmas, for example by having households affected by HIV/AIDS included as members. To favour access for the poorest, farmer groups need low thresholds for entry of new members (i.e., limited number and non-exclusive criteria) and active policies to include all types of farmers and rural households.

Bonding social capital is also required to strengthen learning within the community, similar to the approach used in Farmer Field Schools, but with an extra dimension that the poorest and other small-scale farmers, as well as all gender categories, are involved. Farmers' organizations need to develop the internal capacity to strengthen such learning in groups, as well as to exchange experiences between groups, e.g., through farmer motivators, facilitators and farmer group study tours, and between the different tiers of the organization.

Strong bridging of social capital development is essential to achieve closer interactions between the grass-roots level and intermediate/national levels, also in terms of meeting innovation requirements at the grass-roots level and lobbying for an enabling environment at national level. The existing social capital at community level needs to be identified and applied to local networks (i.e., bridging social capital). The strength of the farmer's voice will increase if there are no parallel or competing networks based on social background, gender, ethnicity, or production orientation. On the other hand, networks can be overlapping, as KILICAFE FBGs can also be members of MVIWATA, and ACooBéPA groups are also members of FUPRO.

Similarly, farmers' organizations need to play their role in rural innovation systems, hence the interactive learning role at all levels (local, meso and national); this requires social capital to be linked at these levels. It involves engaging in planning and policy-making, but above all, in serious performance-based monitoring of the research and advisory services being provided. Important elements include the interaction between farmers' organizations and individual group members on the one hand, and for instance extension services on the other, in determining the target villages, groups, individuals and themes.

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