

BAOBAB



Alternative Markets for Improved Livelihoods





Alternative markets for improved livelihoods

In this issue of *Baobab*, we focus on alternative markets available for small scale farmers. As Paolo Peterson shows in the *Theme Overview*, there is a clear need for small scale farmers to find an alternative to the formal market that is mainly dominated by big transnational agri-business. In East Africa, there is already a high demand for farm produce by markets that are to be found quite close to farmers. Often the challenge lies in the fact that most agricultural production in the region is rain-fed, a situation that often leads to a glut in the market, particularly for fresh produce, because farmers tend to grow similar commodities when rains are good.

For non perishable commodities such as maize, farmers often miss a fair market due to pressure from brokers who get to their farm gates offering non-competitive prices. In such situations, it becomes necessary to support farmers to organise themselves into groups such as cooperatives that give them needed capacity to negotiate for better prices. In her interview with *Baobab*, Miriam Cherogony, the Rural Finance Specialist for the IFAD-supported Rural Finance Knowledge Partnership Programme (KMP) based in Kenya talks about the intervention undertaken by the Programme in Eastern and Southern Africa. She focuses on the need to improve accessibility to finances, which can greatly reduce pressure for farmers to sell commodities when prices in the formal market are depressed.

Ailsa Buckley's article details how Practical Action Consulting (PAC) has developed the Participatory Market System Development (PMSD) approach. The system strives to identify impediments in the small holder farmers' commodities value chain and explore ways of removing them. The aim is to ensure that farmers and those who support them such as micro-finance institutions are well linked for mutual benefits. In other words, interventions by development workers need not be a permanent feature in the lives of farmers. Once impediments to the smooth running of the value chains have been removed, farmers should have an assured market for what they produce.

An example of an alternative market for livestock keepers is captured in the articles written by Mercy Adhiambo and Florence Gichoya. Mercy writes about an alternative market system developed by some pioneering farmers in Kajiado County in Kenya while Florence interviewed farmers who are engaged in popularizing the raising and consumption of rabbits in Central Kenya. We hope that you will enjoy reading this issue. Please feel free to give us feedback about ways in which we can improve your reading experience and ensure that *Baobab* remains the platform that it has become well known for: facilitating exchange of information about sustainable agriculture.

James Nguo
Regional Director

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About ALIN

Arid Lands Information Network (ALIN) is an NGO that facilitates information and knowledge exchange to and between extension workers or infomediaries and arid lands communities in the East Africa region. The information exchange activities focus on small-scale sustainable agriculture, climate change adaptation, natural resources management and other livelihood issues.



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Baobab welcomes comments, ideas and suggestions from its readers. Please contact us via e-mail at baobab@alin.net or write to P. O. Box 10098, 00100 GPO, Nairobi, Kenya.

I am a research technologist involved in scientific research. I am currently in search of scientific and technical publications in biology, microbiology, biochemistry, epidemiology and agriculture. I strongly believe that *Baobab* magazine will go a long way in assisting me to complete my bachelors and post-graduate studies.

Pipi Gift, Umuahia, Abia State, Nigeria

Thank you for writing, you can access this and past issues of *Baobab* by visiting www.alin.net – Editor

I acknowledge the work done by ALIN. It is through *Baobab* magazine that I have improved my farming methods. I currently have five acres of rice at Perkerra Irrigation scheme. I decided to

invest more in rice production than maize because it takes less duration thus I get high returns. The main challenge I face is bird infestation. Please advice us in the next issue how I can solve this challenge.

Jennifer Boiwo, Baringo, Kenya

I am impressed with your article on SRI through the *Maarifa* centre here in Marigat. The magazine is very educative especially here where extension services are very difficult to access. I am only requesting that like in the previous issue please facilitate hard copies of the magazine to enhance access even in our homes where electronic devices like computers are unavailable.

Tekuna, Baringo, Kenya

I am writing from a rural community in El Salvador.

I learnt about your educative magazine, *Baobab* from the internet.

I am a facilitator of a rural development farmers association in western El Salvador in a town called Apaneca. We practice subsistence agriculture with organic methodologies and work with communities on climate change issues and the importance of learning how to mitigate and adapt to climate change. We also learn about best farming practices.

Fidel Velasquez Zarco, Sonsonate, El Salvador



Published by Arid Lands Information Network (ALIN), an international NGO based in Nairobi, *Baobab* is well established magazine that focuses of small scale sustainable agriculture. It has been published since 1988. It covers Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania and all aspects of the agriculture value chain. It is also

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Building Markets: A Challenge for Family Farming

In a situation where transnational corporations are playing an increasingly dominant role in the world's agri-food systems, two of the greatest challenges that family farmers face are developing strategies to improve market access and adding value to their agricultural production. There are many successful experiences that set examples that may be amenable to replication. In general, these successful cases involve developing closer relationships between producers and consumers through revitalising and reorganising local or regional markets, in ways that create space for economically beneficial exchanges and also promote the biologically diverse and culturally-contextualised production typical of peasant agriculture.

By Paulo Petersen



By efficiently articulating new developments in information technology, infrastructure and facilities for the long distance transportation of goods, and by exploiting changes in the institutional frameworks that regulate the domestic and international markets, transnational corporations have come to exert an unprecedented level of control on the configuration of agri-food systems – or on the flows that link the production, processing, distribution and consumption of food. Philip McMichael refers to this as the corporate food regime, (2009) and points out that this has further promoted and intensified the scientific and technological paradigm of the Green Revolution. The effect is manifested by the introduction of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), the rapid and uncontrolled expansion of monocultures and the subsequent standardisation of agricultural landscapes.

An equally massive standardisation process has been experienced on the consumer's side. The political and economic power accumulated by major players in food retailing has led to the imposition

of industrialised junk food, the homogenisation of diets and, by the same token, the destruction of local markets through which family farmers have traditionally sold their produce. The growing homogenisation of production and consumption practices is both a cause and a consequence of the emergence of what Jan Douwe van der Ploeg calls the “food empires” (2008), the governance mechanisms for food and agriculture at a global scale. Truly international, their power increasingly extends to the economic and political arenas, and they now capture an even larger share of the value added along the food chain.

Local alternatives for global challenges

The global dissemination of “nowhere food” (or food whose origins can hardly be traced) is not the only visible trend. In parallel, and developing as a form of resistance to this dominant trend and its negative effects, creative strategies to re-localise and re-contextualise agri-food systems are emerging all around the world. In this sense, markets are the arena where power struggles are taking place



Photo courtesy of ILEIA

between the contrasting and coexisting structures and mechanisms that shape the production and consumption of food. On one hand, there is the political and ideological influence of agri-businesses on national states and multilateral organisations. On the other hand, there are emerging social processes that seek to rebuild, revitalise and diversify market circuits that promote a more equitable distribution of the wealth generated through agriculture, and to simultaneously alter the metabolism of agri-food systems so that the flows of matter and energy are more sustainable. Whether in Brazil or the Netherlands, these examples are becoming more widespread and visible, with producers, consumers and their organisations playing an important role.

In this sense, the development of local markets (or short chains) should be understood as an active social process that aims to increase people's autonomy and independence from the "very visible hands" of multi-national agri-food businesses on the global market. The political dimension of this emerging process construct is increasingly expressed

by the concept of "food sovereignty", a concept that is rooted in the understanding that the access to food of one's choice is a basic human right.

Beyond monetary value Achieving increasing levels of governance over markets is one of the main tenets of the movements, organisations and individuals who promote agro-ecology around the world. Without a doubt, the ability to scale up agro-ecological experiences, both socially and geographically, directly depends on the construction and defence of viable marketing channels that link production and consumption together, and establish stable and transparent relationships between these two economic spheres. The advancement of an agro-ecological perspective for rural development does not follow conventional economic logic, defined in terms of competitiveness and vertical social relationships, but crucially depends on regulated markets that stimulate horizontal relations and co-operation among social actors. In this sense, these markets are reproduced and restructured around social values that go beyond the monetary dimension.

This edition of *Baobab* presents some of the meaningful experiences that are taking place in different countries and in so doing furthers the debate around markets and rural development. What strategies are farmers and their organisations implementing as alternatives to the dominance of large agribusiness corporations? How do farmers articulate strategies that enable them to become more resilient in the face of the uncertainties and threats arising from the volatility of agricultural prices, food crises and global climate change? How do local markets and shortcuts to commercialisation and marketing contribute to generating more sustainable livelihoods for family farmers? How are family farmers' innovations in organisational models shaping new economies? How can farmers' strengthen autonomy within markets? And what is the role of states in interacting with these emerging issues? ■

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Rabbit Farmers Reap



Big in Kenya

Rabbit farming is growing steadily in Kenya. The practice is referred to as cuniculture. Initially rabbits were mainly kept as pets and few people considered them as a source of income. Farmers interested in rabbit business recognised a gap in the market in supplying rabbit meat. They mobilised each other and formed the Rabbit Breeders Association of Kenya (RABAK). Their goal was to empower communities with health and wealth. By 2005, the association had registered more than 3000 rabbit farmers from different parts of the country. The Kenya government believed in the initiative and partnered with the association by offering an office, which is hosted at Thika District Commissioner's office.

By Florence Gichoya

The Chairman of RABAK, Peter Waiganjo told *Baobab* that initially, farmers were motivated to rear rabbits for their meat. However, there were a lot of misconceptions in the society about rabbit meat. "Many people kept rabbits in their homes as pets and they were not willing to buy the idea of rabbit meat consumption," he said.

The Association chose as one of its tasks to sensitise communities on the nutritional value of rabbit meat. Waiganjo explains that rabbit meat is a type of white meat and it is very nutritious. It has lower fat, cholesterol and calories than chicken, pork and beef. In its sensitization efforts, RABAK organized events and invited various stakeholders who would be key in changing society's misconceptions about rabbit meat. These were government officials, hoteliers, butchers, journalists and community leaders. They would be served with rabbit meat during the meetings. The feedback was impressive and local butcheries started selling rabbit meat alongside beef and chicken. This prompted farmers to increase production.

RABAK Chairman
Peter Waiganjo



Facts about Rabbits

- Kits (baby rabbits) are born blind and without fur
- A doe (female rabbit) can produce approximately 30 kits in a single breeding season
- A doe can become pregnant again within hours of giving birth
- Rabbits are more active at dawn and dusk
- Rabbits have a near 360-degree vision and can even see behind them
- If spotted, they flee from prey in a zigzag pattern
- A rabbit's teeth never stop growing
- Rabbits groom themselves
- Rabbits have 28 teeth
- Pet rabbits are often referred to as 'house rabbits'
- The world's largest rabbit was named "Darius" and weighed approximately 23 kilograms

Source: Rabbit Breeders Association of Kenya (RABAK)

Reaching the market To stimulate demand for rabbit meat, RABAK has applied aggressive marketing strategies to ensure that farmers are well positioned to determine the market price for their products. One approach was forming associations of farmers in order to avoid exploitation by middlemen.

Since farmers in Thika had many rabbits to slaughter, they often used the poultry slaughterhouse in the town's market. When a rabbit is wrongly slaughtered it 'defends' itself by urine poisoning making the meat inedible. If that happens the meat should be hanged for about ten hours in order to drain fluids from the meat. It is imperative to have a well-equipped slaughterhouse to prevent urine and fur poisoning of the meat. The Government of Kenya through the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries offered to build the first rabbit slaughterhouse meeting international standards in Thika town. The construction is almost complete and the slaughterhouse is expected to provide employment to more than 50 people from the local community.

More value addition In 2012, rabbit farmers received a big boost from *Uchumi Supermarkets* (a leading supermarkets chain in Kenya) which contracted RABAK to supply 100 kilos of rabbit meat every week. The farmers were involved in the negotiations which saw them secure a profitable market price. *Uchumi Supermarket* continues to stock rabbit meat due to increasing demand.

As more rabbits were slaughtered, farmers saw another opportunity in marketing their skins. On their behalf, RABAK approached the Leather Development Council (LDC) that processes rabbit skin to make inner soles for shoes. This was the beginning of a partnership that is still ongoing. Now the farmers have created a market niche and are able to sell both rabbit's meat and skins at profitable prices.

Jason Nthiga a rabbit farmer in Thika decided to venture in rabbit keeping three years ago and does not regret the decision. Currently he has 65 rabbits housed in a spacious and well aerated hutch. They are kept in different cages according to their age and breeding stage. He normally feeds them with vegetables from his garden once a day and has put a water trough in every cage. Jason slaughters the rabbits when they are at least six months old. He sells the rabbit meat to local butcheries and the rabbit skins to LDC through RABAK. He also discovered that rabbit's urine is a good pesticide and uses it on his orange trees. Jason concurs that the demand for rabbit meat is high and he intends to increase their number.

Rabbit breeds There are different Rabbits breeds that are reared in Kenya. They include; Californian, Chinchilla, Flemish Giant, New Zealand White, ILRI Giant, Dutch and French Lope. The breeds vary in body shape, fur color and behavioral characteristics.

Housing Rabbits housing requires a small space referred to as a hutch. It is constructed using locally available materials such as wire mesh, timber and iron sheets for roofing. It should be raised from the ground to allow good drainage. The hutch should be situated in a well-aerated compound. They should be kept in different cages for proper recording.

Rabbits should be fed on good quality pellets, fresh grass, vegetables and water. They are normally slaughtered after six months and should weigh at least two kilograms. They live for 8-12 years. The climate in Kenya and East Africa region is appropriate for rabbit farming. ■

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Breaking Institutional Barriers

Female entrepreneurs are a formidable force in Zimbabwe's rural areas. Although often only seen as subsistence farmers, women are the main traders of fresh fruits and vegetables. They are strategic players in the movement of food from the field to the nearby urban areas. Yet, they face challenges on a daily basis, including inhibitive market rules and regulations, and gender insensitive institutional structures.

By Shiela Chikulo

Research in the Goromonzi District in 2012-13 has shown some of the constraints that they face – that add to the many issues that their male counterparts have to deal with when marketing their products. Female traders are required to work and often sleep in open market spaces, where there is no shelter to accommodate them, a lack of toilet facilities and the presence of bullying middlemen.

The obsolete market infrastructure and general mayhem in the market spaces is particularly challenging for women. In addition, formal finance institutions have historically entrenched stringent criteria for granting loans and credit to small enterprises which are biased against women. If the farm is not joint-titled, married women are not eligible to be considered for a loan. Options for accessing credit from micro-finance institutions and lending agents are limited, as they ask for large collateral and high interest rates.

Despite these challenges, women play a very important role in all rural areas, and many venture further to access distant markets in the capital – which again poses another set of risks. In an attempt to overcome the cumbersome, frustrating and unappealing process of securing loans, women in Goromonzi, and other parts of the country, have established social finance schemes,

as savings groups where members pool together their resources.

These attempts need to be accompanied by adequate public policies and private support. Zimbabwe needs by-laws that are formulated in a participatory manner, involving those who link producers and consumers. And these by-laws then need to be enforced in a manner that doesn't disenfranchise women entrepreneurs. At the same time, finance institutions and banks need to revisit the criteria and conditions under which women can access credit facilities, particularly those aspects related to collateral and titles to assets. Such anomalies should be addressed openly. Finance institutions should also build on the existing informal social networks for the provision of finance, working with those groups of women that have demonstrated the ability to organise themselves and be accountable for revolving funds. These changes will help women entrepreneurs continue supporting their families, while simultaneously contributing to economic recovery and growth. ■

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Innovative Center Links Pastoralists to Markets

Livestock is the major source of income for most pastoralists in Kenya, but for many years, they have struggled to find a suitable market for their animals. With the erratic weather patterns brought about by climate change, they are now facing challenges like frequent droughts, scarcity of water and pasture which affect the quality of their animals, reducing their market value even further.

By Mercy Adhiambo



Cattle farmers in Kiserian

Having seen the need to improve the value chain and ensure that pastoralists get the most from their livestock, Michael Kibue, a farmer in Kajiado County came up with a market access center (MAC) which is a model that facilitates reduction of transaction costs through networking of market actors. The MAC is used by Keekenoike Market and Slaughterhouse, a community-owned abattoir managed by pastoralists. It is located in Kiserian Town in the outskirts of Nairobi.

So far, the MAC model has played a key role in linking pastoralist groups especially for the market access centers based in Kaputei and Loitokitok rangelands. "Due to the fact that the livestock market chain was not organized, pastoralists ended up incurring losses. They would take almost eight years rearing a cow to maturity only for them to sell it for about Kshs.15,000 (about US\$180). The value chain was so informal having many middle men before it reached the terminal market

and the pastoralists were not benefitting much from their animals," said Mr. Kibue.

The MAC aims at giving pastoralists more returns and ensuring that they benefit directly from their livestock products by organizing themselves into groups, registering the groups and giving them information on livestock prices through developed market information boards.

Actors in the value chain trade their commodities through the MAC, which links them to markets and provides a platform for transactions between traders and buyers. The transactions are secured through a Transaction Security Services (TSS), which allows the MAC to take details of the seller, their product characteristics, buying price, and the physical location of purchase. The MACs offer market access and TSS to

rural agricultural producers including pastoralists. The concept was developed through FAO and supported by the Rural Knowledge Network Project which links value chain players with markets, finance and market information.

One of the farmers, Mr. Ole Tunda, who is also the chairman of the Keekenoike Butchers Limited, says that he has been in the business of selling livestock for more than 20 years. He acknowledges that pastoralists have come a long way when it comes to marketing their animals.

"We would bring our animals to the slaughter house but sometimes we would be forced to go back with them because we didn't have ready market and this was very tedious. That has changed because now we are more organized as a group and we have also been taught how to value our animals so that we do not make losses," he said.

The MAC also recognizes the need to mitigate against climate change. They have now embarked on reseeded the rangelands, growing more grass and educating pastoralists on the use of renewable sources of energy. From the slaughterhouse, they get animal waste and convert it into energy. They hope that they will soon be able to package it and sell it to farmers at a reasonable fee, so as to stop deforestation that is caused by over dependence on firewood for fuel.

The model was chosen as one of the outstanding innovations during the recently held Eastern Africa Farmer Innovation Fair (EAFIF) which showcased the achievements of individual and groups of smallholder farmers from Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Convened by a network known as Promoting Local Innovation (Prolinnova) in Nairobi between May 28 and 29, 2013, the Fair showcased the work of farmers who had made unique innovations that either enable them to improve incomes or to strengthen their resilience against climate change.

Challenges Michael Kibue still recognizes that there are challenges that farmers face such as high transaction costs for animals. He is however optimistic that with the use of modern technologies such as cell phones could help cut down transaction costs.

Farmers are urging the government to fund them so that they can expand their markets and even be able to export their products. "If the government gets in and funds us, we will be able to expand and start other projects like keeping rabbits, pigs and chicken," said John Sironik, a local farmer. ■

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Rural Finance Knowledge Management Partnership

Anthony Mugo interviewed Miriam Cherogony, the Rural Finance Specialist at the IFAD-Supported Rural Finance Knowledge Management Partnership (KMP), below are excerpts.

What is that Rural Finance Knowledge Management Partnership?

The Rural Finance Knowledge Management Partnership (KMP) is an IFAD grant funded regional programme that is focusing on the rural finance thematic area. The main tenet of implementation is knowledge management support to IFAD programmes. To have greater influence on rural finance policy development, KMP partners with better-resourced agencies, such as the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), which share IFAD/KMP's objective of promoting the development of rural finance through more effective knowledge innovation, dissemination and adoption. KMP is partnering with The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) to undertake community based specialized action-based research with its network of 30 universities.

Why is market access for small-scale farmers a concern?

In the past, so much emphasis was put on the production side but this strategy has resulted in little change to the smallholder farmer's situation. Smallholder farmers are rational and will only produce if the market for their produce is assured. Therefore, market focused interventions are becoming increasingly important in many development interventions.

Some have said small-scale farmers need alternative markets to the formal global market, what is your opinion about this?

Farmers are faced with immediate household financial needs that sometimes determine the market option they choose. This exposes them to exploitation by middlemen who are able to meet this immediate financial need. They therefore need alternative fair markets. IFAD has supported government rural finance programmes that aim to

address this financial need gap as well as KMP grant that acts a knowledge broker for these programmes.

How does it work?

Most of the programmes support various interventions including organising farmers to set up rural financing mechanisms particularly by forming community based financial institutions, savings and credit co-operative societies (SACCOS), community banks and in some cases linking with formal commercial banks. In Tanzania for example, Agricultural Marketing System Development Programme (AMSDP) supported the establishment of a warehouse receipting system and created links between small-scale farmers with a formal financial system and introduced inventory credit.

Why in your opinion is it important to regard finance as part of the agriculture value chain?

Finance is an enabler or an embedded service in the agriculture value chain. One common mistake made by development programmes in the support of small scale farmers is the over emphasis on production, while giving little regard to the existence or non-existence of a market for what is being produced. For me, we should think, "Market first". The starting point should be some form of market analysis, which in turn assists in informing the choice of crop to be grown. We need to take advantage of information and communication technologies (ICTs) that have simplified the market survey process and enabled farmers to concentrate on high value crops. I am always amazed at the new development and use of ICTs in East Africa including the ALIN's *Soko pepe*.

Do small-scale farmers in the region have an alternative to the formal market system?

In Kenya, 92 per cent of agricultural produce is consumed locally. There is therefore immense demand for agricultural produce by local markets.



Miriam Cherogony
during the interview

An initiative based on this reality is Farm Concern International. They started by supporting 2,000 farmers of fresh produce and linked them with major local supermarkets and open-air markets through contracts. FCI played the role of an aggregator of produce, providing extension support and financing farmers through invoice discounting to the tune of 70 per cent upon delivery of quality produce. Then FCI pays after the one-month credit period and the remaining balance to the farmers. FCI has grown into multi country programme supported by various agencies promoting the commercial village approach to markets.

Please clarify the role of ICTs in alternative markets

What is happening in the region with regard to ICTs is simply phenomenal. Just this week, I was at a forum where various ICT initiatives were being showcased. One of them was *Tangaza Pesa*. *Tangaza Pesa* enables mobile money transfer service across all mobile service providers and has now become a major competitor of *M-Pesa*. I am also aware of *SokoPepe* by ALIN, which has grown in stature and aims to be a holistic knowledge management platform to deliver a range of services to small-scale farmers using a basic mobile phone. Opportunities provided by ICTs in the region are simply astounding. They enable farmers to do what they are good at “tilling the land” while transacting using their phones from the comfort of their homes.

Aggregation of produce has been emphasised, what is your opinion about it?

In many high potential areas across East Africa, the acreage available to each farmer has been declining. This is particularly so in Kenya where only 20 per cent of land is high potential. Very few farmers have adequate acreage to produce needed quantities. Aggregation of products is therefore an important strategy for small-scale farmers to achieve volumes and hence the need for aggregators providing “win-win” propositions for farmers.

There is an assumption that facilitating market access leads to the improvement of livelihoods of men, women and young people. Is this a correct assumption?

Nothing could be further from the truth. Across East Africa, we have a patriarchal land ownership system. In most cases, women are involved in the production but men are involved in the marketing and control the money. In Kenya, women own less than one per cent of land. They have minimal

access to assets, which greatly compromises their ability to access credit for investments. This is why most development partners are supporting microfinance institutions in order to increase financial inclusiveness.

As for young people, their apathy towards agriculture is attributed to the Facebook culture. We should take the agriculture debate into the Facebook space. Many youth prefer faster income generating activities. For example, practicing greenhouse-based agriculture would ensure regular supply of produce and therefore regular earning for other needs. Dairy farming is another option that assures regular income. The other approach is to introduce high technology in small-scale agriculture such as computer controlled drip irrigation systems that youth can readily embrace and find relevant. They should also be involved in marketing activities such as buying and selling if they can be organised into marketing groups and provided with requisite resources.

Is there linkage between alternative markets for small-scale farmers and climate change?

Yes. I will give two examples. One is a multi partner initiative led by the International Centre for Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE) in Kakamega Forest in Kenya. Traditionally, people in Kakamega have chewed Mukobelo shrub only found in Kakamega Forest because they believe it has curative properties. ICIPE has encouraged farm propagation of the medicinal shrub and created a huge market for its products which has ensured the exploitation of the forest has been greatly reduced. In the same forest, ICIPE has introduced silk farming (sericulture) and ecotourism involving youths to chart tourists’ routes through the thick forest and to label trees.

The other example is in the Mount Kenya region where there is a project to conserve the water tower. Along the numerous rivers originating from the mountain, upstream farmers are encouraged to practice conservation agriculture. In return, hydropower-generating companies such as KenGen compensate upstream farmers through green water credits to ensure good flow of clean water to downstream farmers and in adequate volumes to ascertain hydro electricity generation. These efforts contribute to biodiversity conservation and improve community’s resilience to climate change. ■

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Farmers use *Soko pepe* to Access Markets

Farmers from Laikipia West District in Laikipia County, Kenya, have often struggled to find markets for their agricultural products. Often, they resort to using brokers in an effort to find ready markets for their produce, especially those who grow perishable commodities. The brokers appear at their farms during harvest season ready to buy their commodities in cash but at much lower prices than the farmers would get if they took their produce directly to the final market. The other challenge they face has been lack of timely and reliable access to up-to-date market information and the reality that the farmers are poorly organized and have therefore not been able to bulk their produce and to enhance their bargaining power.

By Mercy Adhiambo

Having seen the need to ensure that farmers get higher value for their products, ALIN has developed *Soko pepe* (www.soko pepe.co.ke) an ICT-based system aimed at enabling farmers to efficiently reach and exploit a fair market for their produce. The system increases efficiency in the agriculture value chain by providing a platform for farmers to share information and execute electronic transactions.

It is an integrated supply chain solution that collects agricultural commodity information from the field, collates it into a regional and national perspective and disseminates packaged products to end users via various media, including SMS, WAP, E-mail and Web. It also provides a payment mechanism whereby users pay for the information they receive and for services such as buyer/seller matching and posting of bids.

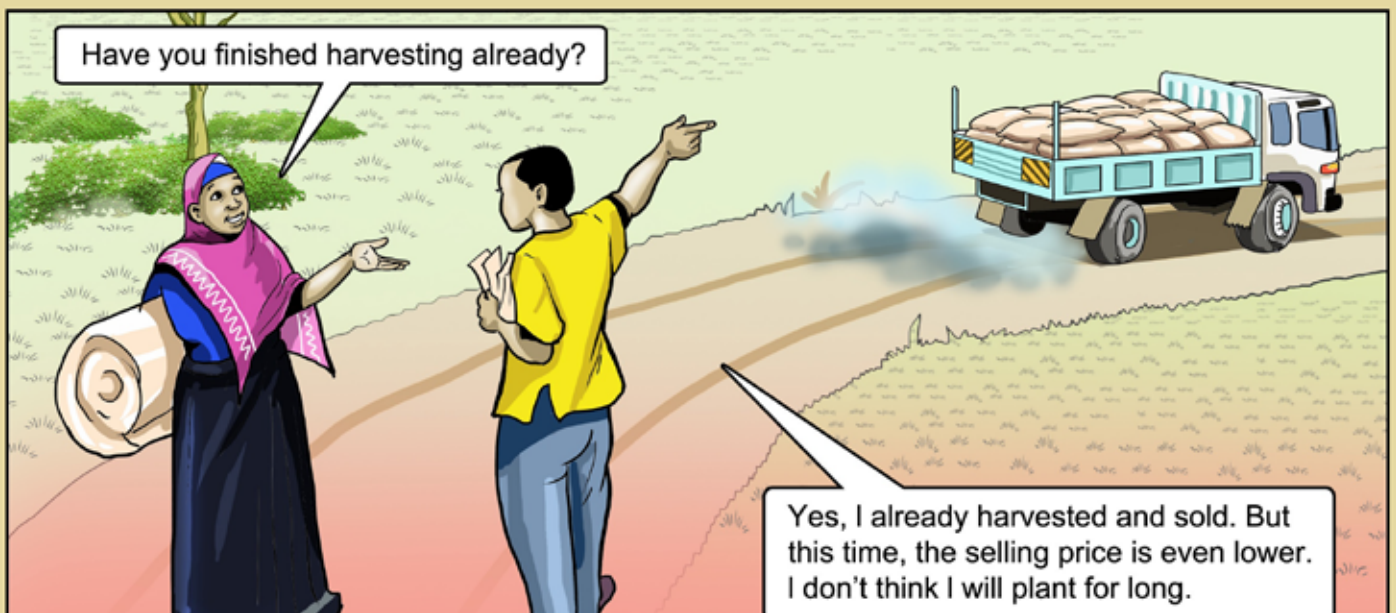
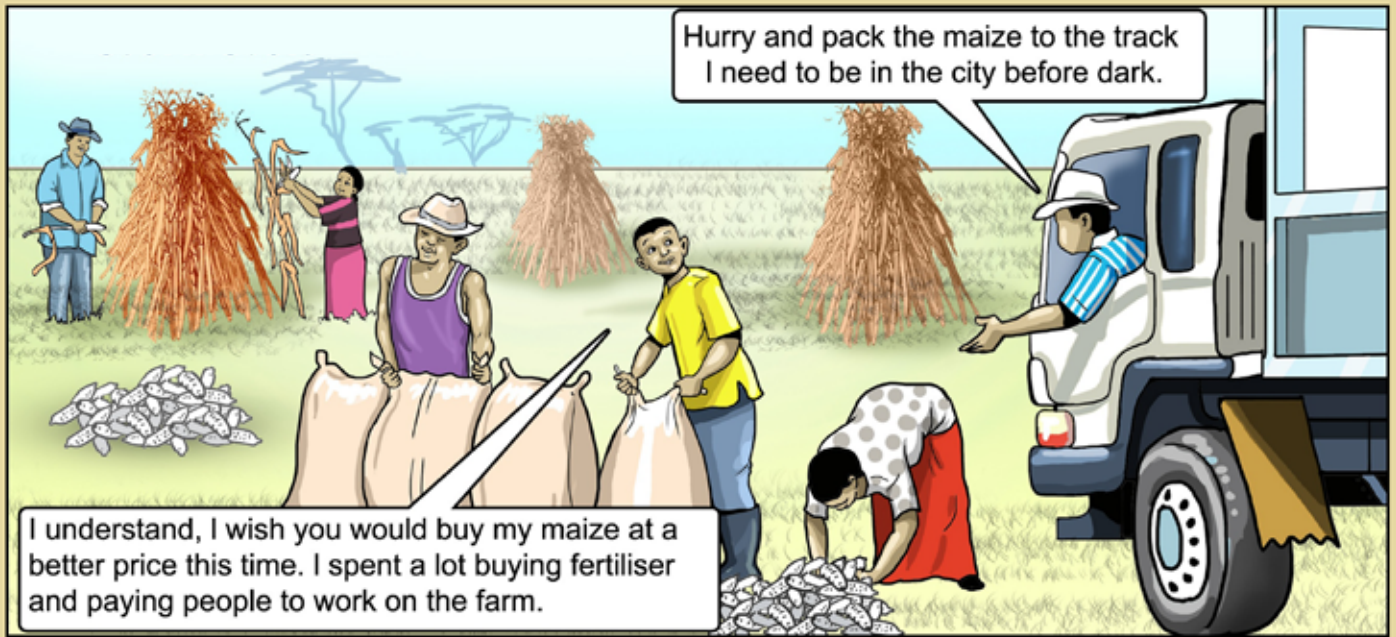
Mr. Muthee Mwangi, a tomato farmer from Githima Sub-location, Ol-moran Division, Laikipia County was introduced to *Soko pepe* through a series of workshops that were held by ALIN to build the capacity of farmers on opportunities that they can seize to market their farm produce. He now uses *Soko pepe* to inquire about prices of commodities and receives instant feedback on his phone. He therefore no longer has to rely on a broker to access the market. At one point, Mwangi and his farmers' group sold 14 tons of tomatoes through *Soko pepe*.

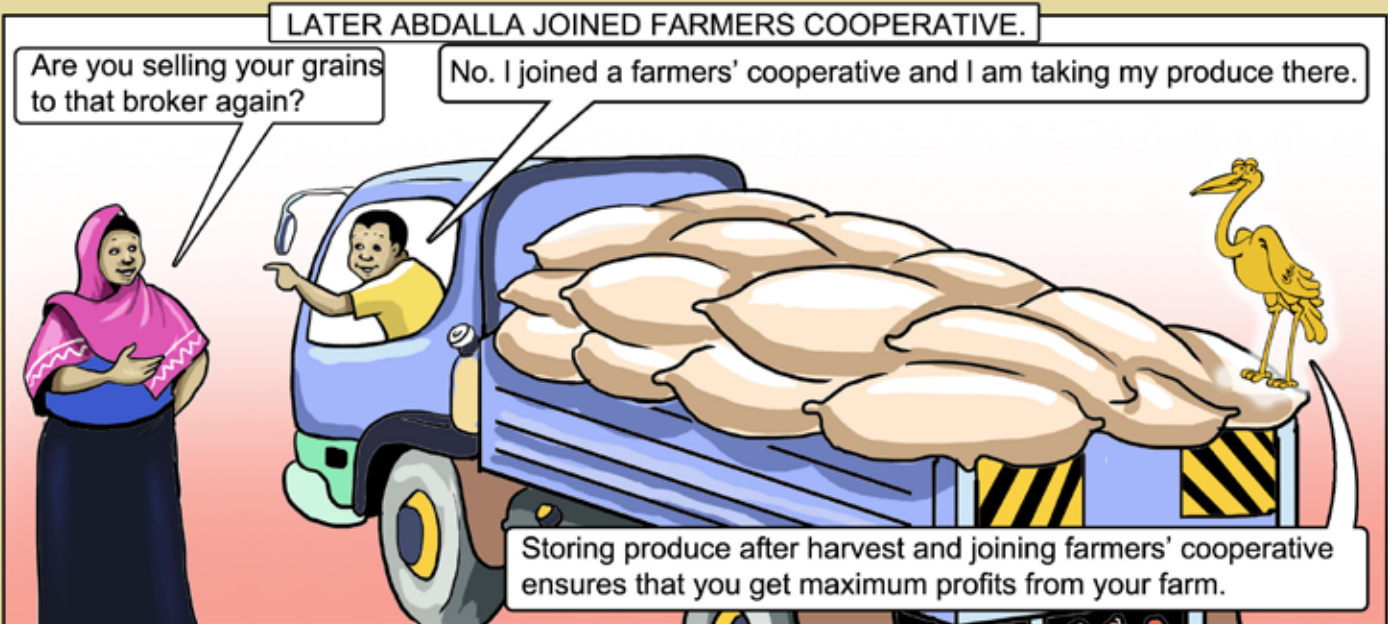
"I have made several connections with buyers from different parts of the country and I am presented with several options which enable me to choose from the buyer I find most suitable. I am no longer restricted when it comes to marketing my produce," said Mwangi.

Most transactions on the *Soko pepe* platform can be completed using a basic mobile telephone handset through SMS, making it accessible to farmers in remote locations. Majority of the farmers do not own internet-linked mobile phones. This has made it possible for people who previously did not have direct access to online agriculture information, particularly women and the youth to use the system. In a sense, this has brought these previously excluded members of the community to the mainstream, enabling them to participate in the agriculture value chain at various levels.

On the platform, a mobile short code: 20245 is used to get information about prices of commodities in distant markets and therefore empowers farmers to determine how much they sell their commodities.

Challenges to access By coming together and using the *Soko pepe*, the farmers have identified challenges that are hindering them from getting the most from their produce. One of them is poor organization. In response, they have formed a cooperative society named 'Laikipia Produce and Marketing Cooperative Society' to help them bulk their produce and take control of the market. ■





Grain Warehouse Opportunities



Following two decades of armed conflict; Northern Uganda has remained below adequate levels of productivity. Many formerly displaced persons with access to fertile agricultural land face input constraints (seeds, tools and knowledge). This limits their ability to increase productivity, and hence restricts their ambitions to basic survival. In addition, poor post-harvest practices, pests, diseases, erratic climate factors, serious erosion of the basic agricultural skills and land conflicts continue to affect recovery efforts. Difficulty in accessing markets continues to hamper achievement of sustainable livelihoods. Yet the North constitutes the largest region representing over 30 per cent of Uganda's total land surface. Large tracts of land remain unused or underutilised, resulting in an enormous loss of economic potential.

By John Opira

Broadens Market in Northern Uganda



A producers' warehouse at Gulu, the main town in Northern Uganda was recently refurbished and equipped to give an opportunity to farmers and traders so that they can add value to their produce and penetrate bigger markets. Located in Gulu Town, Gulu warehouse, formerly a produce marketing board store was refurbished and installed with high capacity machinery for grain processing, cleaning, grading and storage for farmers and traders in the region. World Food Program (WFP), through its "purchase for progress" initiative rehabilitated and opened the store in 2011. The infrastructure was then handed over to Coronet Group to manage.

According to Masaazi Robert the Warehouse Manager, Coronet started managing the warehouse in 2011. Since then, they have handled about 1,533 metric tons of grain. Currently the facility has 512 metric tons of grain stored in the premises. The warehouse has the capacity to handle 6000 metric tons. Given the current usage, it is clear that the facility is underutilized. Robert admits that they are currently operating at only 16 per cent of potential capacity.



The Gulu storage warehouse and facilities



Stored grain in the warehouse

Services at the warehouse

The facility is open to both farmers and traders. Some people prefer to get services and store the commodities elsewhere, whereas others will bring their produce for cleaning, grading and storage, while they look for markets individually or wait for brokers to contact them. The warehouse is licensed to process or handle maize and beans only. Farmers or traders bring their produce at the facility, before it is considered for processing. The Commodity is checked for quality (moisture content of less than 18 per cent, contamination, and infestation levels). Once the grain passes the quality tests, it is further dried, cleaned, graded and quantity ascertained. The farmer is then issued with a grade and weight certificate. It is this certificate that is used to generate an electronic warehouse receipt.

Warehouse receipt Once issued with a warehouse receipt, the farmer can opt to use the same to access a loan from the bank. Banks usually give 60 to 70 per cent of the value of the warehouse receipt, but this is solely at the discretion of the individual banks. It must be noted that once the commodities are processed and graded, the owner will give it a value, and then it is stored under the custody of Coronet Group. The information in the warehouse receipts is posted to Uganda Commodities Exchange (UCE), which publishes prices and available quantities in the newspapers on a weekly basis.

There are brokers at the UCE who link buyers to producers but it is vital to note that the produce dealer is expected to look for a market for his goods. Coronet usually stores commodities for a maximum of six months. After that period, it is necessary to clean the grain again, thus attracting additional costs.

Challenges One Mr. Ochola, a maize grower in Bobi region recounts a number of challenges associated with post harvest care for grain. “I cannot afford the cost of hiring a maize sheller and tarpaulins for drying are equally expensive,” he lamented. This shows that some farmers know the best practices but may not afford some of the primary equipment needed for proper post-harvest care. It is also true that lack of information relating to post harvest care could be the problem. A Mr. Okello, another grain dealer, complained: “There is generally lack of access to big markets and there are many non-quality oriented markets but some buyers do not focus on good quality.”

This has been a source of frustration to those who use the facility with expectation of getting ready market. Worse still, some dealers have high expectations, leading to setting up high prices after grading and cleaning. Some people believe that exploiting international markets after value addition should be the trend. This however may require full government support or other market linkages.

Other grains The warehouse manager believes that licensing the facility to handle only maize and beans is partly to blame for its underutilization. The region grows other grain crops such as rice, groundnuts, sesame and sorghum that could be similarly cleaned and stored at the facility.

The current trend is such that middlemen buy grain from stockists located in rural villages and transport it to Kampala or other destinations like Juba in Southern Sudan. As a result, prices for most farmers have remained low because grain quality is not thoroughly checked. It is therefore important that a deliberate move is taken to sensitize the community about the existence of these services and how they can reap from it. ■

John Opira is the Country Manager for ALIN Uganda. E-mail: jopira@alin.net



Lincon Njiru the Laikipia West District Crops Officer demonstrates to farmers on potato planting. KAPAP has partnered with the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries to empower farmers

Linking Small Scale Production with Agribusiness: A Value Chain Approach

Kenya Agricultural Productivity and Agribusiness Project (KAPAP) is an initiative of the Government of Kenya jointly funded by the World Bank. Its main objective is to increase agricultural productivity and incomes of smallholder farmers using a value chain approach. KAPAP's activities contribute to these objective by transforming and improving the performance of agricultural technology systems, empowering men and women stakeholders and promoting the development of agribusiness in the Project area.

By Dennis Kipkirui

The implementing agencies of KAPAP are the Ministries of Agriculture, which comprises of the following departments: Livestock; Fisheries; and Co-operatives Development and Marketing. The Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) is also an implementing agency. Under KAPAP, farmers' access services through producer groups, which are vehicles for farmer empowerment. Services to the Project beneficiaries are offered through a value chain approach.

In 2012, the KAPAP Regional Service Unit in Nyandarua County contracted five consortia to offer services in the dairy, potatoes, commercial peas, local poultry and bee keeping value chains. In Nyandarua, KAPAP has 24 Project locations. Each location is divided into four zones for ease of reaching farmers. Interventions by the service providers are provided at the zonal level. The Project is well spread in the entire county that has an area of 3245.2 square kilometers and a population of slightly over 500,000. Some 60 per cent of its land is arable, making it ideal for agricultural production. Economically, the area has a growth rate of 2.4 per cent.

In line with both the National Agricultural Sector Policy (NASEP) and the Agricultural Sector Development Strategy (ASDS), which advocates pluralism in service delivery, KAPAP engages highly qualified service providers from the public and the private sectors.

Service providers Agro-Consult Services addresses challenges in both the poultry and commercial peas value chains while Aberdare Agricultural Services deals with apiculture (bee keeping). On the other hand, Jetspan Limited deals with dairy production and Alfa Kilimo deals with potatoes.

The service providers are expected to address challenges that exist in each value chain. These challenges are identified by farmers and also researched by KAPAP. Each service provider signs a contract with farmers for a specific income target. Funds for service provision are deposited in value chain accounts that are managed by farmers. In this arrangement, service providers are paid by the farmers in agreed upon percentages as the farmers progressively move to achieve their targeted incomes.



According to Nyandarua KAPAP Coordinator, Mrs. Agatha Thuo, their role is to continually ensure that the consortia provide the services they are contracted to do, and to monitor the level of wealth created on quarterly basis. To monitor progress, KAPAP uses Management Information System (MIS) software to track the amount of wealth created. For example in the year 2011/2012, wealth created from commercial peas was Kshs. 440 million (US\$5 million), potato raised Kshs.400 million (US\$4.7 million) dairy raised Ksh.185 million (US\$2.2 million). Dairy, however, has greater potential than what has been realised. The interventions were done in only selected locations with the vast County. Local poultry and bee keeping realized Ksh 24 million (US\$.282,000) and 16 million (US\$188,000) respectively.

The management structure of KAPAP has been organized in such way that each location, division and ultimately the County has County value chain leadership. The executive signs contract with service providers and KAPAP acts as a witness. KAPAP also conducts frequent monitoring and evaluation to ascertain progress on behalf of the farmers.



Activities of KAPAP in Nyandarua cover only 50 per cent of the County. For example, research indicates that Nyandarua County alone can produce 40 tons of commercial peas per week.

Value chains spread Value chains are spread based on potential of farmers to undertake a given value chain. For example, Ngano area has successfully undertaken dairy production. Farmers there have produced large quantities of milk and now keep quality dairy animals. The projected wealth created in this sector is Ksh. 128,100 (US\$1,500) per cow per year. Dairy animals kept are mainly Friesian and Arshyire breeds of cattle.

Horticulture is practiced in all regions of Nyandarua County. Snow peas and potatoes do well in every part of the County, except where rainfall is low. Mirangine area has managed to produce snow peas for export markets. It mainly supplies to *Finlays* and *Everest* companies. Potatoes are also cultivated here. KAPAP, through the service provider (Alpha-Kilimo), has involved the Potato Research Centre to ensure that farmers produce large amounts of quality potatoes in the area to improve their livelihoods.

Poultry value chain is practiced in the northern part of the county where temperatures are not very extreme. Ngano area has given dairy and poultry special emphasis. They keep improved indigenous birds. A fully-grown chicken weighs 4-6 kilograms.

Apiculture Apiculture is mainly practiced in Kipipiri areas. Geta Division has successfully run the project. Farmers pack their own honey. Geta Honey is a well-known brand that emanates from the area. Families have managed to put food on their tables and send their children to school courtesy of bee keeping. KAPAP recognizes that it was imperative for them to introduce this value chain in line with Natural Resource Management (NRM) policy. This will enable communities surrounding forests to conserve them while realizing benefits. ■

Dennis Kipkirui is a community journalism trainer with ALIN Ng'arua Maarifa Centre. He runs the Laikipia Rural Voices Blog. E-mail: keepdennis@yahoo.com



PRACTICAL ACTION

Ailsa Buckley of Practical Action during the interview

Creating and Enabling Market Environment for Small Scale Farmers

Practical Action's Participatory Market System Development

Supporting the agriculture value chain to become more efficient may not necessarily benefit small scale farmers unless our actions focus on the more marginalised actors and ensure our work is pro poor. At Practical Action we employ our approach to value chain development called Participatory Market System Development (PMSD).

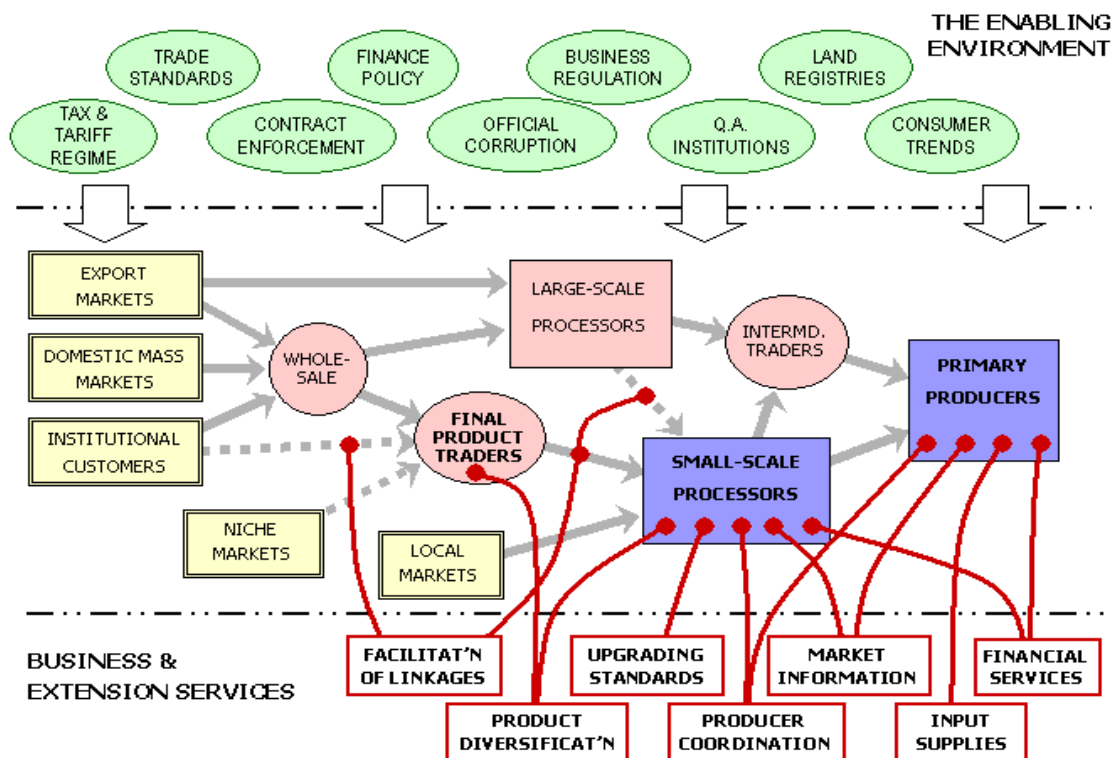
By Ailsa Buckley

We define a MARKET as the network of actors in the core market itself – all those that are involved in producing, exchanging, and consuming the product – as well as the support functions and services – and recognize that this is operating within the sector's context and particular business environment. In this case we are not talking about END MARKETS for products but these three sub-systems that make up the whole market.

Market systems are fundamental to delivering benefits to the poor as they have the potential to connect marginalised producers to networks and give them access to relations, technologies and assets that can help them escape poverty. But you cannot develop market systems unless you understand them so we identify key actors from the different levels of a market: and undertake participatory market mapping exercises for a clear understanding of the functions, participants, and relationships among participants in that system. We also support the actors to identify constraints and opportunities to market growth in their sector.

Participatory workshops Our participatory workshops facilitate collaboration and joint action amongst market actors and policy-makers. This is a crucial time to involve producers and other often excluded actors, such as youth and women, in assessing the issues and agreeing what changes they want to see. We particularly work to ensure the inclusion of the more marginalized by improving their market literacy and interaction and engagement skills. We think about how to empower those actors so that they become capable and able to interact on an equal footing with the more powerful and market-savvy actors.

The mapping workshops help the actors understand their market systems and is a way to promote dialogue and improve understanding between market actors. It creates a negotiating space in which diverse market actors can begin to appreciate each other's interests, develop trust and negotiate solutions that have mutual benefits. For example, perceived exploitation of farmers by brokers is often based on a lack of information relating to the role and function of that actor in the value chain.



Participatory approaches are particularly relevant in situations where there are problems of mistrust and high levels of uncertainty. In our experience participatory analysis and planning can build transparency and trust between actors.

These workshops bring actors together to assess the opportunities and blockages and agree actions that form the basis of strategic intervention many of which the market actors themselves can take forward with no support from external agencies.

Points of leverage We encourage the actors to identify the key points of leverage within their system that if touched, can unblock the market for everyone's benefit. Often solutions that assist our farmers can be delivered via an entry point that exists in a very different part of the market. In other words, we can benefit farmers without focusing all our initiatives at the upstream part of the value chain. For example, we have worked with aloe market actors in Kenya to identify policy issues as the key blockage and facilitated changes in the business environment to make the market work better for the farmers. Working in this way ensures that interventions build on the existing capacities and capabilities of local actors.

At the moment we are working with a range of actors (from farmers to supermarket buyers, from policy makers to micro-finance institutions - MFIs) to map the markets for traditional crops and identify the

crops with the highest demand in the local market. In collaboration with Fair Trade Africa and Christian Aid, we are using PMSD (<http://www.slideshare.net/pmsd-map/the-pmsd-roadmap>) to assess the potential to introduce the Fair Trade mark to local consumers and certify farmers to be assured of minimum prices and premiums.

Assisting market actors The key message here is that development practitioners should work as FACILITATORS of the market system and assist the market actors to discover and prioritise the issues themselves and agree together how to bring about change with a vision of market change in mind. For example the vision may relate to better serving local markets or developing international market. But the issues and relevant solutions must be co-created with the market actors so they feel a sense of ownership and 'buy-in' to forthcoming actions. Development practitioners should understand that their role is temporary and that successful market development interventions ensure that vibrant and commercial markets exist beyond the end of the donor funded intervention. Facilitation is about catalyzing and motivating others to take actions and market facilitators are therefore flexible and responsive and have a 'light touch' when engaging with the market. ■

Ailsa Buckley is the Practical Action Consulting Manager for East Africa. E-mail ailsa.buckley@practicalaction.or.ke

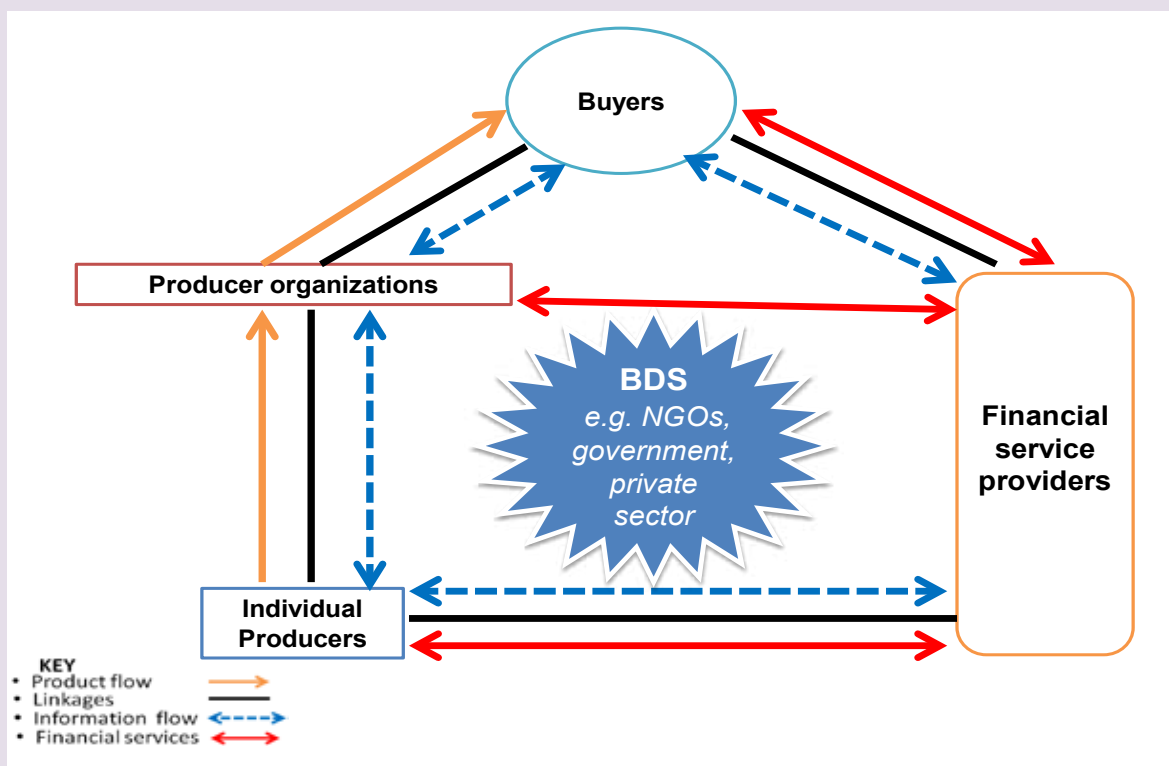
Markets: Learning by Doing

AGROBIODIVERSITY@KNOWLEDGED aims at generating and sharing evidence and insights. At the heart of the programme is a global knowledge and experience community of organizations working on agricultural biodiversity with millions of farmers worldwide. Markets are a key entry point to scaling up practices that build on agricultural biodiversity. PELUM’s work demonstrates how testing and analysis of different marketing models has led to the development of a new marketing approach.

By Maryleen Micheni

Most economic activities in the rural areas are related to the region’s biodiversity and to the services this biodiversity provides. Although many of these activities contribute to the loss of this biodiversity, a number of them have a positive effect, while at the same time providing for higher incomes or economic profit. The generation of income or profits, at the same time, can have a large influence in the development of new initiatives that contribute to the conservation of a region’s biodiversity.

The PESA model Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) is a network of more than 230 civil society organizations, representing ten countries in East, Central and Southern Africa. Since it was founded in 1995, it has worked with small-scale farmers in the promotion of ecological land use practices as a way of empowering communities and simultaneously reducing the loss of the region’s biodiversity. Working together with the East and Southern African Farmers Forum (ESAFF),



PESA Agro Enterprise Marketing Model

we developed the PESA Agro Enterprise Marketing Model (while the word “pesa” means money in Kiswahili, the title takes the “P” from PELUM and “ESA” from ESAFF).

Various marketing models were selected and looked at in detail in a consultative process involving the ESAFF farmers and the PELUM extension staff, comparing them with the “theory” as presented in, for example, the FAO Farmer Business Schools model. Participants in four different countries (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Rwanda) carried out a study of these different marketing models, paying attention to the role played by different stakeholders and carefully taking into account how each case succeeded in helping farmers to market their products.

Meeting in Kigali Results were shared in a meeting in 2012 in Kigali, Rwanda from where a task force took the assignment of developing a proposal. The group came up with the “PESA marketing model”. The model embraces a 6-stage process that encourages farmers to interact with the market through a “learning by doing” approach, engaging with the different stakeholders and developing skills in a step-by-step way. In short, these steps include (a) the formation or strengthening of a group, (b) the introduction of marketing and business concepts, (c) the identification and prioritisation of market opportunities, (d) the identification of potential investors, (e) the development of a business plan, and (f) the provision of (and access to) specific services.

Following the same “learning by doing” approach, we started a pilot project to try this model in the field – and learn from its implementation. This was planned for two years, after which all the PELUM member organizations will introduce it in order to facilitate the commercialization processes of their members. The lessons will be applied depending on the product and context of marketing.

Trying it out Located in Baringo County in Kenya, the Kapkuikui Livestock Self Help Group (KLSHG) focuses on bee keeping and the production of honey in an ecologically friendly way, maintaining a rich crop and tree diversity as a source of food for the bees (see box). Every year, the group produces an average of 2.5 tons of honey; half during the main harvest season (November to January) and half during the minor season (June and July).

Trying out our PESA model, we started by identifying market opportunities for this honey in the area. A smaller team of six members conducted a market chain assessment, trying to assess and understand the purchasing practices, the terms and conditions followed, and the main demands or interests of consumers. A “business market facilitator” from the Baraka Agricultural College helped in making the initial contacts. After visiting and interacting with four supermarkets, four pharmacy shops and three hotels, the group secured many new orders for honey. Even more important, the process helped the group to learn about the need of a stronger “business relationship” between producers and consumers, and the minimum conditions and requirements.

Group members discovered the advantages of preparing a detailed business plan, which includes adding value to their products, and thus expanding their market options. Furthermore, they saw the need to invest money in machinery or equipment, and the importance of their organization to implement their plans.

Looking into the future The PESA model has been tried for 12 months, and will continue for another 12 months. Although the pilot project is not yet finished, the initial results are very promising. The knowledge and skills acquired by the KLSHG members through the 6-stage approach have empowered the group. During this period, KLSHG has shown that higher incomes and the conservation of an area’s biodiversity can be mutually supporting efforts. If these initial results prove to be indicative of the success of the approach, all 230 PELUM members will introduce and implement the model in their own specific context. In the meantime, the participatory process of learning by doing is already helping other organisations. The PELUM experience demonstrates that the participatory process of analysis, development and implementation of an innovative marketing approach is a powerful tool for positive change. ■

Maryleen Micheni works as Senior Programme Officer at PELUM, Kenya. The “markets and trade” thematic group of the Agrobiodiversity@knowledge programme would like to invite readers to send case studies describing other marketing process. Focusing on agrobiodiversity products, these case studies should consider the financial returns, the commercial viability of the enterprise, or the emergence of public-private partnerships. These case studies need not only be success stories. Please send them to Maryleen Micheni (maryleen@pelum.net) and Willy Douma (wdouma@hivos.nl).

GULIO: The Walk-in Open Markets of Tanzania

By Noah Lusaka

Gulio is a Swahili word meaning open market. An open market is a space where traders erect makeshift shades to exhibit their ware. At other places, the exhibitions are just in the open without any shade. In Tanzania, each town has a designated market day each week or sometimes once each month.

The market days are normally very busy with people trading in many things ranging from agricultural produce, livestock to clothes, hardware and farm implements. Many communities visit the market to buy foodstuffs because the costs are slightly lower than if bought from the shops. The men mostly go to sell livestock while women sell other commodities like fish, onions tomatoes and much more. Here is a pictorial show of the market place in Songambele Tanzania.

The market days are also days when families plan to 'eat out'. Plenty of foodstuff and drinks are sold targeting the market goers. Many people prefer after shopping to relax at the market for some entertainment until tusk when they go back to their homes. A lot of money is exchanged during the market days. This has necessitated the government to offer some security personnel to patrol during the market days to avoid petty thefts. ■

Noah Lusaka is the Projects Manager at ALIN.
Email: nlusaka@alin.net



A busy open air market day and pastoralist trading livestock



Goats bought and ready to be transported



An open air butchery selling meat to customers



Fruits sold on the market by women

Agriculture Education for Change



Family farmers face climate change, limited water availability, rising fuel costs and unknown market opportunities, while their land is coming under increasing pressure. They require access to information and knowledge that can help them deal with the complexity of the context in which they live.

Most rural areas nowadays have access to some form of education. Nonetheless, the agricultural education system often has many shortcomings. Many get frustrated because the education available does not provide them with the answers they are looking for. Education rarely prepares youth for a future in agriculture and often encourages them to migrate to urban centres. Girls and women often do not have the same educational opportunities.

Many experiences are showing that agricultural education can do much more. It can be a powerful tool in strengthening the social value attached to farming. It can make people aware that there are low-cost and sustainable alternatives to “modern agriculture”

which, for many small-scale farmers, can be a route into debt and misery. Clearly changes are needed at different levels – at vocational schools and agricultural universities, but also in informal and adult education initiatives and even at primary schools – so that education makes a positive contribution to agriculture.

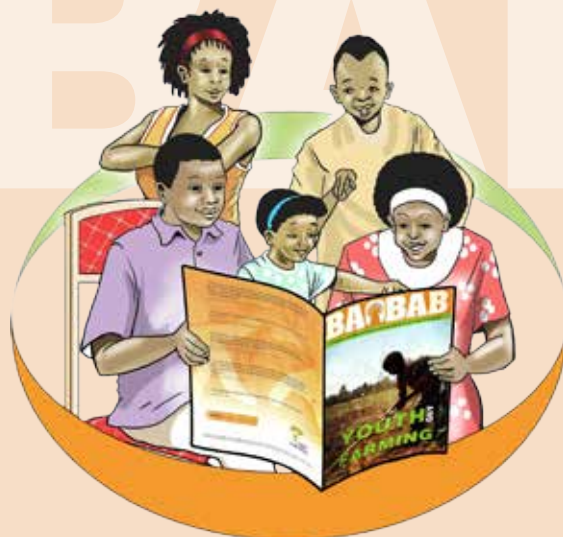
Agricultural educators – whether extension agents from public or private sector, university professors, school teachers or farmers themselves – need to become agents of change. They need to support farmers in the task of reconnecting to the agro-ecosystems that they manage, rather than becoming increasingly disconnected from them.

Issue 68 of *Baobab* will focus on the role of education in changing the mindsets of rural communities. We seek contributions that describe innovative education in rural areas. Who are involved? What is being taught? What teaching methods are used? What lessons are learned? And what makes these experiences valuable? We will also look at how educators prepare themselves for their job in a fast changing world. What their aspirations are; how the education system supports and how they connect with different stakeholders in the agricultural system, such as farmers and other value chain actors, fellow educators, researchers and policy makers.

Please send your contributions and feedback for the next issue to info@alin.net

BAOBAB

WATERING THE BAOBAB



Introduction

The *Baobab* is a quarterly magazine that is published in March, June, September and December. Every issue has a theme that guides the topic one can write on. Topics for 2013:

March: System for Rice Intesification

June: Markets

September: Education and Extension

December: Strengthening Family Farming

How to Write

Know what you are writing about in advance and think clearly, carefully reflecting on:

- WHAT was the initial context and what were the difficulties faced?
- WHAT were the reasons for the approach taken to improve the situation?
- HOW did they go about it and who took the initiative?
- WHEN did all this happen, and to what extent was the timing important?
- WHAT happened as a result?
- WHY did it work out as it did? (We appreciate opinions/analysis/ conclusions relevant to field level, as well as recommendations for policy makers).
- WHERE did the action take place?

Please Ensure that You

1. Thoroughly read the call for articles and check that the article fits well with the theme being covered.
2. Explain any terms or ideas that may not be understood in every part of the world.
3. Acknowledge all sources and references used.
4. Explain any abbreviations used.

Full editorial support is provided. As the articles go through a rigorous editorial process, authors are usually requested to provide additional information or clarifications. We would therefore rather have too much information than too little in the first draft!

Format

1. Articles should be about 700 to 1000 words (one, two or three-page articles) and should be emailed to baobab@alin.net or info@alin.net as a word document attachment.
2. Include no more than five references. Each reference should include title, year of publication, name of author, and publisher.
3. Please provide a current contact address at the bottom of the article. This will also be published in the magazine. We would also appreciate a contact phone number for our own use.

The editor reserves the right to decide whether or not to publish an article or contribution after receipt of the first full draft. Articles that are accepted will be edited to the *Baobab* house style and shortened if necessary.

Contributions edited in this way will be returned to the authors for approval before publication. Articles accepted for publication in the *Baobab* may be chosen for translation in any of the six regional editions. We will endeavour to inform authors if their article appears in other editions.

Photos

Pictures speak volumes. Two to four pictures relevant to what you have written must accompany your article.

Illustrations, drawings, or maps are also welcomed. Please provide the name of the photographer or artist. Please ensure the photos or illustrations are of suitable quality.

Send the pictures as attachments in jpeg format of at least 300kb and above. Also remember to include a caption outlining the people or activity in the picture.

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Contribute to Joto Afrika

Do you want to tell people how your community is adapting to climate change?...

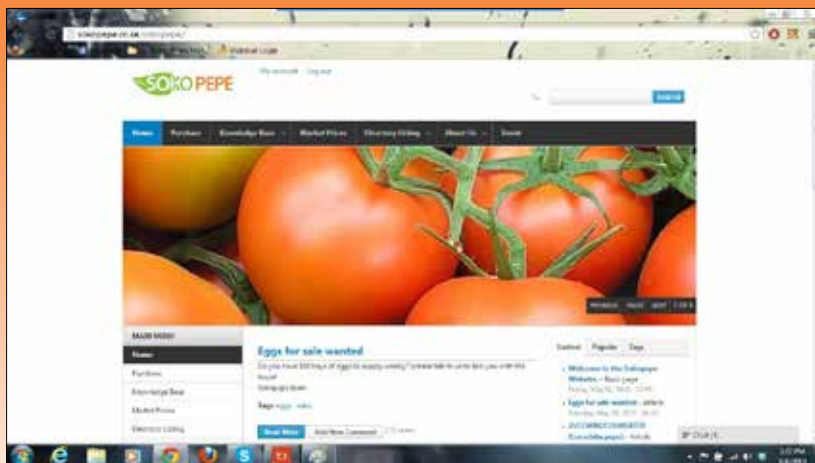
Are you involved in a programme, project or research that is helping people to find practical solutions to cope with the effects of climate change? We want your contributions for Joto Afrika!

We are looking for research work, community case studies, videos, audio clips and photo essays about climate change adaptation across sub-Saharan Africa.

The case studies need to be short (no more than 600 words), easy to understand and provide practical information for other people facing these problems. If you would like to contribute, please contact the editor at jotoafrica@alin.net. We welcome contributions in French and English.

Sokoapepe is ready for launch!

ALIN's innovative platform, Sokoapepe (Kiswahili for "virtual market") is ready for launching.



Sokoapepe (www.sokoapepe.co.ke) is a mobile phone and online based knowledge management platform for agriculture information featuring among others: a payment solution, agricultural commodity prices, inputs and outputs information as well

as tips on good husbandry and post harvest practices. Most tasks can be completed on a basic mobile telephone handset, making it accessible to farmers in remote locations, many of whom do not own internet-linked smart phones.

Farmers, commodity traders and agro-pastoralists are encouraged to register with Sokoapepe. Please visit www.sokoapepe.co.ke

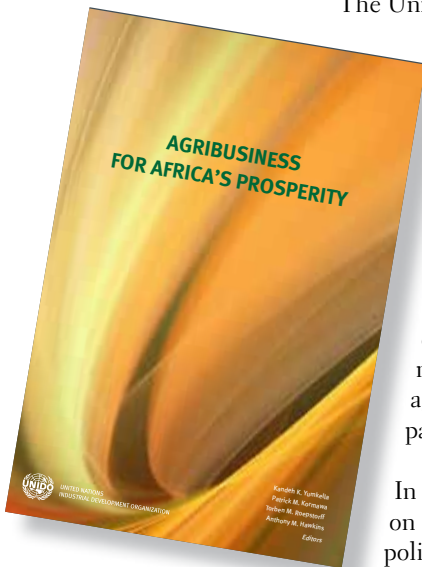
To find market prices for your desired commodity send an SMS:

Start with price # commodity # location send to: 20245 on the Safaricom network.

In case of any queries E-mail: sokoapepe@sokoapepe.co.ke

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Agribusiness for Africa's Prosperity



The United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO's) book titled: *Agribusiness for Africa's Prosperity* presents the state-of-the-art of agribusiness development in Africa. This work analyses the challenges, potential and opportunities of African agribusiness in the context of the current dramatic changes in global agro-industrial markets, and builds a case for agribusiness development as a path to Africa's prosperity.

In recent years a renewed focus on agriculture has been evident in policy and development agendas for the African continent; yet little knowledge has been generated on the inter-linkages of production, agro-industry and markets, as well as the potential and capacities for developing these.

Agribusiness for Africa's Prosperity outlines the current status of agribusiness and agro-industrial activities in Africa, and situates them in historical and global context. It analyses the opportunities for diversified growth, and assesses the existing and potential sources of demand growth for agribusiness development in Africa. Seven development pillars are outlined and analyzed in detail.

Written by international experts, from agribusiness practitioners to academic experts and UN technical agencies, the book fills what UNIDO perceived as a significant gap in knowledge concerning these issues. It stands as an important resource for policymakers, agribusiness managers and researchers in agribusiness development.

Source: http://www.unido.org/fileadmin/user_media/Services/AgroIndustries/Agribusiness_for_Africas_Prosperty_e-book_NEW.pdf

A Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty

For more than 15 years, Abhijit V. Banerjee and Esther Duflo have worked with the poor in dozens of countries spanning five continents, trying to understand the specific problems that come with poverty and to find proven solutions. Their book is radical in its rethinking of the economics of poverty, but also entirely practical in the suggestions it offers.

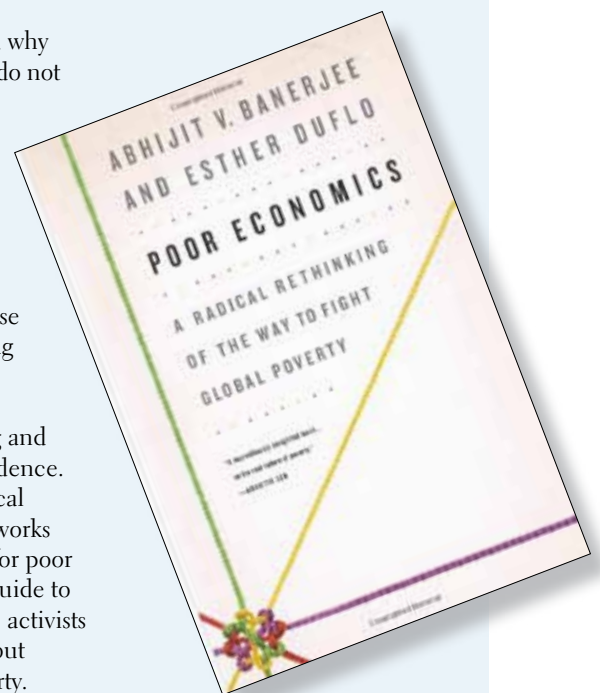
Through a careful analysis of a very rich body of evidence, including the hundreds of randomized control trials that Banerjee and Duflo's lab has pioneered, they show why the poor, despite having the same desires and abilities as anyone else, end up with entirely different lives.

Through their work, Banerjee and Duflo look at some of the most surprising facets of poverty: Why the poor need to borrow in order to save, why they miss out on free life saving immunizations but pay

for drugs that they do not need, why they start many businesses but do not grow any of them, and many other puzzling facts about living with less than 99 dollar cents per day.

Poor Economics argues that so much of anti-poverty policy has failed over the years because of an inadequate understanding of poverty. The battle against poverty can be won, but it will take patience, careful thinking and a willingness to learn from evidence. Banerjee and Duflo are practical visionaries whose meticulous works offer transformative potential for poor people anywhere. It is a vital guide to policy makers, philanthropists, activists and anyone else who cares about building a world without poverty.

Source: <http://www.pooreconomics.com/about-book>



“It would be better for governments, donors, development agencies and big business to work to understand and support the strategies small-scale farmers are already using, as they combine formal and informal ways to make markets work for them”

Ethel Del Pozo-Vergnes, senior researcher at IIED, quoted by The Independent (Kampala) after the publication of “Small producer agency in the globalised market: making choices in a changing world”. November 29th, 2012.

"The policy to procure local foods [for school feeding] has set in motion a cycle where the smallholder farmer is ensured a solid market for their produce thereby enriching their income, and those who make up the school feeding supply chain. This has had a great impact on the economy of Ghana"

Ghana's President, John Kuffuor, addressing the Global Child Nutrition Forum 2012, Addis Ababa. Quoted by The Guardian (“School meals: as good for farmers as they are for children? How an African-led initiative to provide local food for school children is building a new market for smallholder farmers”). March 15th, 2013.