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## Basis for poverty reduction? A rich civil society, farmer innovation and agricultural service provision in Kabale, Uganda

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## **DIIS Working Paper 2004: 2**

# **Basis for poverty reduction? A rich civil society, farmer innovation and agricultural service provision in Kabale, Uganda**

**Research carried out for the CARE supported Farmer Innovation Project  
(FIP), Rubaya Sub-county, Kabale District, Uganda**

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## Acronyms

AFRENA	Agro-forestry Research Network for Africa
AFRICARE	Africare
ARDC	Agricultural Research and Development Centre
AHI	African Highlands Initiative
AMREF	African Medical Relief ...
ASPS	Agricultural Sector Programme Support
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CBP	Community Based Planning
CBSF	Community Based Service Provider
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CIAT	International Centre for Tropical Agriculture
CIP	International Potato Centre
DANIDA	Danish International development Agency
EDF	European Development Fund
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FIP	Farmer Innovation Project
ICRAF	International Centre for Research in Agro Forestry
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
IITA	International Institute for Tropical Agriculture
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
ISAMI	Income Smoothing and Marketing Initiative
KADFA	Kabale District Farmers Association
KI	Key Informant
LC	Local Council
LGDP	Local Government Development Project
NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory Services
NARO	National Agricultural Research Organisation
NEMA	National Environment Management Authority
NGO	Non Government Organisation
NRM	National Resistance Movement
PMA	Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture
RC	Resistance Council
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
T&V	Training and Visiting
UNSPFA	Uganda National Seed Potato Producers Association
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

## Abstract

*This paper looks at the potential for poverty alleviation in one part of Uganda, based on a poverty analysis of the local, and on analyses of the local civil society and of development discourses that are often dominated by the central over the local. In response to calls for micro-studies of actually existing civil society it points to the usefulness of including community wide processes and hegemonic discourses in analyses of the local civil society's development role. Inspired by the IDS civil society Concept paper's list of civic organizations' roles: "*

- representation of the interest of specific groups in relation government and to other sectors of society;*
- mobilization of social actors to increase their consciousness and impact;*
- regulation and monitoring of state performance and the behaviour and actions of public officials;*
- developmental or social action to improve the wellbeing of their own or other constituencies," (IDS 1998, p6)*

*It includes both the great plurality of local groups found in Rubaya, a poor, fairly isolated and distant sub-county in Southwest Uganda, as well as community planning and plan implementation, as important parts of civil society analyses.*

*Rubaya is really poor compared to other parts of Uganda, especially because of its constrained non-agricultural sector, and because people seem to be making up for that by selling food crops to get an income, which to some extent endangers their own food security. It is also clear, however, that there is social differentiation with repercussions for different groups of farmers' agricultural and livelihood strategies, as well as their abilities to respond to agricultural interventions.*

*The analysis revealed that Rubaya is endowed with a rich and vibrant local civil society, which is a potential link or counterforce to larger external institutions – developmental or financial in nature. A civil society that does mirror the social differentiation, but which still, despite their somewhat lower group membership and planning participation, encompasses the poorer sections of society.*

*In the last 15-20 years 2-4 different community planning processes have been introduced into and adopted by village communities, which have proven to be able to plan and implement work on their own needs as communities. Participatory methods can make it more inclusive, as in the CARE FIP project, but disintegration into disparate planning processes, may lead to community frustration. New civil society structures, in their form of local functional groups have also mushroomed in recent years, because of new opportunities, partly opened by NGO interventions like CARE FIP. They enhance further the basis for agricultural innovation – which also, contrary to expectations, appear to have been existing for a long time.*

*Contrary to the popular development discourse about Kabale district, farmers have historically invented and/or adopted basic additions to, and thus maintained their farming-systems, in response to population growth, new socio-economic conditions, and externally introduced innovations.*

*While this is supported by mutual communication and being organized through local groups, and by community capacities being enhanced through participatory planning processes, both NAADS and FIP, as new extension initiatives, are, though inclined in that direction, to different degrees in their conception and implementation far from really embracing a new paradigm , where most important would be empowering farmers on technology development, by enabling them to: identify problems; work with problem solutions; experiment with their own and new solutions; – and thus enhance their self respect, also by showing that outsiders respect, what they are doing.*

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Civil Society and poverty

With the demise of the African developmental state and dwindling enthusiasm for its dominating role in African development, which often went hand in hand with one party systems and their “popular” mass-organizations, the concept of *civil society* has re-emerged as an idea (as David Lewis puts it), but this time particularly used in the African context (Lewis 2002). Discussed in the 1990s in the aftermath of structural adjustment and embraced wholeheartedly by the donor community by the beginning of the new millennium it is both an analytical concept – and highly political. Curiously, as the latter, it has, with its condoning of the *good governance* conditionality, functioned to legitimise renewed donor support to African states and governments!

Thus having for some time propped up the market forces and private business, rich country government donors are increasingly refocussing their development aid into programme and basket funding for the state, while at the same time channelling funds through international NGOs (e.g. CARE) to civil society support and so-called “advocacy”. The market/state/civil society donor financed development nexus is created. Since the marginalized groups, poor peasants, women in poor households, small indigenous groups etc. often do not access formal markets and civil society organizations, the risk is that the state/civil society dichotomy analytically overshadows once again the need for poverty analyses of the opposing interests that permeates both state and civil society processes.

The present paper tries to base an analysis of the potential for poverty alleviation, on a poverty analysis of the local, and on analyses of the local civil society and of development discourses that are often dominated by the central over the local. Being in a way a response to calls for more micro -studies of actually existing civil society (Mamdani 1996 and Comaroff and Comaroff 1999, quoted by Lewis 2002) it points to the usefulness of including community wide processes and hegemonic discourses in analyses of the local civil society vis-a-vis the central state. Starting out from the issue of local poverty we arrive at a broad view of civil society (as does e.g. Gibbon 2001) as much more than the neo – liberal policy oriented and representative organisations. The IDS Concept paper’s list of roles civic organizations may perform: “

- representation of the interest of specific groups in relation government and to other sectors of society;
- mobilization of social actors to increase their consciousness and impact;
- regulation and monitoring of state performance and the behaviour and actions of public officials;
- developmental or social action to improve the wellbeing of their own or other constituencies,” (IDS 1998, p6)



while not used there in a definitional way gives a good pointer to the organizations to look for, i.e. from local kinship and womens groups, social welfare and joint production groups to pure interest groups. In Rubaya, a sub-county in Uganda, we were surprised to discover the great plurality of local groups, some, but very far from all, established to attract NGO or government support under the new civil society support.

In Rubaya, furthermore, the institutions which performed most of the above roles, represented the communities most vocally, and with which most people identified, were the Local Councils, or LC1's. While originally established in opposition to the official local government system, they have since 1986 formally been part of it. However in Uganda, where village communities are very small (less than 100 households, who are all members of the Local Council), and where the LC1 has no paid officials, its role proved to be much more one of local action to improve community wellbeing and of representing community interests in relation to government officials at higher levels, than of implementing government policies. Community planning and plan implementation is therefore analysed as an important part of *civil society*.

## **1.2 Kabale District, the Farmer Innovation Project, and this research**

This is – yet another – study of Kabale district (part of the former Kigezi) in South Western Uganda, and particularly one of its sub-counties, Rubaya [b is pronounced as a v in vernacular ruchiga]. Throughout the colonial and post colonial periods, until today, this area has been targeted by numerous studies and development interventions, which have been hinging around the widely understood crisis in the highlands of the district. The crisis has been invariably related to a very high population density in the area (361 people per square kilometer), rampant land fragmentation widespread land degradation, low agricultural productivity, food insecurity, and subsequent low opportunities of escaping out of poverty. (Raussen et al. 2002).

The present study and the CARE *Food Security through Farmer Innovations Project (CARE FIP) (CARE 1999)*<sup>1</sup> to which the study has been attached, have however, rather than focussing on the crisis, addressed the capacities of the farmers and local communities to cope with and even improve their situation, as demonstrated both historically and in recent developments of the local civil society.

CARE FIP responded to this context by aiming at enabling farmers to further appreciate the extent of the crisis in which they live, through participatory community planning processes. The planning processes would then be used by the communities to come out with more realistic evaluations of and viable solutions to the crisis, which would be expected to include individual

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<sup>1</sup> The authors wish to thank CARE Denmark for its financial support and CARE Uganda and CARE Kabale for their generous professional and friendly help. With this, and other contributions, we hope to have paid some of it back, including a bit of all the the time villagers in Rubaya spent on us.

or collective demand for agricultural and natural resource management services. The opportunities for and sources of provision of such services was expected to be discovered during the planning process, partly through CARE FIP facilitation. Specifically, technologies to address the land problems were expected as well as participatory natural resource management processes such as experimentation, that would confirm the applicability and relevance of those technologies. The processes would additionally enlist farmer's own innovations through experimentation with different types of crops and practices.

The CARE FIP approach assumed that through the community planning process farmers would identify the already existing institutions promoting suitable agricultural technologies and thus link up with them through demanding services from them. It would also mean that the farmers would need to organize in order to dialogue with the outsider organizations through their local existing or new institutions.

The present study was coined to look at the FIP intervention, including the planning processes and their major outcomes and the existing local institutions that farmers could use to dialogue with outsiders or who could as well take advantage of information generated in the planning to contribute to solving the apparent crisis. The local institutions, whether in touch with the FIP planning process or not, if studied would also provide information on efforts at local organization and the extent to which they are involved in tackling the crisis independently or with the help of other institutions than FIP.

FIP reports (Whiteside 2002 & CARE Denmark/CARE Uganda 2002) had furthermore identified the need as a basis for assessing the FIP intervention to study a combination of factors that might contribute to the non-adoption of improved technologies:

- High cost of soil conservation compared to potential gains, with lack of markets and low prices;
- Gender relations may be a constraint for soil conservation;
- Time gap between soil conservation investment and gain;
- Land shortage vs. land consumed by soil conservation measures.

In addition it was proposed to look at broader social factors including:

- Land tenure and land fragmentation;
- Limited access to service delivery and the efforts to enhance it through the NAADS process;
- Lack of or weak institutions linking individual farmers together and organizing farmer/(local) government relations.

On that basis the following objectives of the study were formulated:

1. To assess the development of participatory planning processes that enables the Rubaya farmers to define their development needs, to pursue them individually and collectively, and to demand the required external support from service providers.

2. To assess to what extent the present FIP approach, through its participatory processes succeeds in identifying the character of the crisis, its causes and potential remedies as seen by all stakeholders, including the poor farmers and the women. On that basis to suggest how it might be improved.
3. To use the results in an effort to develop improved methods to enable communities and supporting institutions to generate improved planning processes. These would aim at developing their production systems, food security and incomes, based on understanding and respect for farmers own perceptions and experiences with developing their production systems through own innovations as well as adaptation of scientific discoveries.
4. As a means to achieve the above, to provide an improved understanding of the relationships between farmers (especially the poorer farmers) and their livelihood strategies, their CBOs and other local institutions, local government, and NGOs like CARE (in the form of FIP);
5. Similarly, to analyse the production system in Rubaya, including land management and tenure and farmers organizing practices, in a historical perspective in order to understand its development as farmers responses to social, economic, institutional, physical and technological challenges; and to identify Rubaya farmers' own perceptions of the challenges to their production system, seen both in that historical and in the present context. (Miir & Boesen 2002)

### **1.3 Outline of the research report**

The outputs of the study presented in this report focus on:-

1. The poverty problem in Rubaya sub county. Section 2 demonstrates the relationship between poverty, food insecurity and lack of nonagricultural incomes in Rubaya. A comparison is done by comparing Rubaya with 5 other districts where a similar approach to poverty analysis was conducted ( ). Comparisons are drawn between the poor, the less poor and the better off households within the sub-county, as well as with the differentiation in the other districts. Both negative and positive poverty aspects of Rubaya in relation to the other districts are highlighted.
2. The potentials of Rubaya: a strong civil society expressed through community planning and local groups. Section 3 analyzes the strengths of Rubaya as it relates to historical and present community based participatory planning activities. Additionally, the role of local institutions in Natural Resource management and in bettering community livelihoods is looked at. The planning activities' success answers a strong institutional support from and linkage with the local institutions. Strengthening of the participatory planning has involved different institutions. Section 4 shows the proliferation of local groups in recent years, and their increasing involvement in agriculture and plan implementation.
3. Agricultural and technology development. Sections 5 and 6 address present institutional efforts towards agricultural technology development in Rubaya, set in a historical perspective. Section 5 shows how both external (government and NGO) interventions

and farmers responses have tried to cope with Rubaya's difficult and changing social and physical environment. A focus is also given to the different technology dialogue interventions and aspects of farmer innovation. Section 6 is about recent extension interventions. Given the importance of advisory services in small holder farming, this section looks at recent efforts to modernize public extension efforts, including privatization of extension activities. Analyses are done comparing the role of CARE FIP and NAADS as stakeholders in extension service delivery especially in capacity building and in contributing to the governments privatization of extension.

## **1.4 Methodology**

The study was conducted in Rubaya sub county in Kabale district, South Western Uganda. Rubaya borders the country of Rwanda to the south, Bufundi sub county to the west, Bubaale sub county to the north, and Kamuganguzi / Kilembe sub county to the east. Its Northwest and Northeast part is bordered by Lake Bunyoni. The sub county is accessed about 30 km from Kabale Town.

### *Research design*

The study used a combination of research methods including a quantitative household survey to capture the poverty levels of the population, land management, livelihoods and institutions linkages. Qualitative research methods used included group interviews, focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and document review. Historical interviews were also conducted. A transect walk was also conducted in 5 villages giving an average distance of ----km. The household survey was conducted with a sample size of 360 from those 6 out of the 18 parishes of the sub county, in which there were CARE FIP activities, the sample covering both FIP and non FIP villages. Key issues captured included demography, institutional membership, land ownership and management practices, and agricultural and non-agricultural household issues.

Over 24 Focus group discussions were held with an average of 15 participants each. These were conducted in both FIP and Non FIP areas and covered aspects of community and group activities in planning and the related dynamics and outcomes. Key discussions were held on land management and group based technology testing activities. Aspects of non agricultural social and income activities were also discussed. Key informant interviews were conducted with institutional representatives (public and private) on aspects of community based planning, technology development, extension and nonagricultural income. Development ( ) and Research NGOs (2) working in the area were among the visited institutions. Related interviews focused on the historical aspects of community planning, technology adoption, land management and institutional linkages. Transect walks, using a GPS to characterize the farming, land management, land fragmentation, and tenure were conducted in 5 villages of the sub county. 2-4 km of steep hill – from top to bottom - were covered in each village. The transect walks

involved the research team moving with a group of between 5 –10 informers balanced between men and women

### *Data analysis*

Quantitative data from the household survey were entered into the SPSS version 10 program and analyzed for measures of central tendency, distribution frequencies, and cross tabulation on variables of interest. Major comparisons were between the poverty levels of the households and their livelihood strategies, land management, and institutional linkages. The basic variable in the analysis, computed from a number of other variables, was the poverty levels in the area (see section 2 for the poverty analysis methodology).

Qualitative data from the FGDs and KIs or mainly handled through thematic analyses and trends, as well as in obtaining general inferences of aspects of interest. Comparative analyses are done with other studies to obtain authoritative support of the findings (or discuss divergences). As part of data management and triangulation of the information 2 feedback workshops were held with stakeholders in Kabale district and CARE Uganda. The report endeavors to respond to the concerns, corrections and recommendations raised during those meetings.

## **2. Poverty analysis, Rubaya sub-county**

### **2.1 Measuring poverty**

Development interventions in Uganda often target Kabale district because it is regarded as one of the poorest and least developed parts of the country. Its poverty is usually, as mentioned above, attributed to rapid population growth despite already longstanding high population densities, with subsequent accelerating land fragmentation and over-exploitation of land, leading to low agricultural productivity and food insecurity. Consequently development interventions, since the resettlement schemes of the colonial period, have almost exclusively aimed at introducing agricultural modernisation and commercialisation.

Even with the increasing focus on poverty in recent years, there has been little effort to reinvestigate the root causes of poverty in Kabale district, in order for interventions to target these better, and even less to challenge the commonly held and easy assumption that with the prevailing dire poverty, farmers in Kabale must be one homogenous poor lot, who are likely to respond similarly to the same interventions

A poverty analysis, however, comparing the characteristics of the poorest people, the not so poor and the well to do in Kabale (Rubaya) with those in five other Ugandan districts revealed quite different anatomies of poverty in the six areas, which is likely to provide interesting indicators of

its different causes. Similarly, it showed that even in one small sub-county like Rubaya, expected to be extremely poor, the farming population is far from homogenous, and that the poverty level of a household seems to be an important determinant of its agricultural behaviour and capacity to respond to development interventions.

The poverty analysis used a methodology developed for monitoring an Agricultural Sector Programme Support piloted by DANIDA in five representative districts.<sup>2</sup> Below, a brief description is made of the methodology as used to develop profiles of household poverty in the districts of Kabarole, Masaka, Pallisa, Rakai and Tororo, 2001.

At heart of the impact monitoring was the development of district poverty profiles for later monitoring of changes in these profiles. Just as the Uganda Participatory Poverty Assessment (MFPED 2000), the development of these gendered district poverty profiles takes rural men's and women's perceptions of poverty as its starting point. It then continues to translate these perceptions into measurable indicators and combine these into a poverty index. Through systematic sampling of communities and informants from whom poverty perceptions are solicited and careful analysis of the poverty descriptions obtained, the methodology allows qualitative and essentially location-specific poverty perceptions to be turned into a quantitative and absolute poverty index. This combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches and finding ways of making comparisons of poverty between different locations but based on local understandings of poverty rather than externally defined poverty measures has for long represented a challenge in poverty analysis and monitoring both in Uganda and elsewhere.

#### *Well-being rankings*

6 communities were sampled for well-being rankings in each of the 5 districts. In each community 3-4 carefully selected men and women were then asked to rank all households by arranging name cards in three to four heaps of high, middle, low and if needed, very low, according to the perceived well-being of the households. The informants (85) then described the well-being of the groupings in their own words.

All descriptions were analysed against emerging themes such as land ownership, livestock, health, food, education and marital status. Approximately 781 statements on household well-being were identified. The statements were grouped according to themes and to the level of well-being they indicated. This analysis revealed that the most frequently used indicators are valid in all five districts. Indicators that were used by few informants added little new information to what could be derived from the most used indicators. It was therefore valid to use a common set of indicators in all five districts in a questionnaire formulated to provide data on these indicators.

---

<sup>2</sup> The methodology is presented in detail in (ASPS 2002)  
It was originally developed in (Ravnborg 1999)

### *Questionnaire survey and poverty index*

A total of 400 households in each of the five districts were interviewed making a total sample size of 2,000. In each district, 14 to 20 different communities (LC1's) were included and a random selection of households was made.

In order to have a single measure for household poverty, a set of 13 different indicators was developed based on the themes that were most frequently used by the informants. These include:

- land ownership
- non-agricultural sources of income
- day-labouring
- animal ownership
- hiring agricultural labourers
- food security
- quality of diet
- housing quality
- health status
- children's schooling
- dressing
- marital status
- age

For each indicator descriptions were made to match three different levels of poverty: highest, middle and lowest. Each level was given a score of 33 (lowest), 67 (middle), 100 (highest): The higher the score, the poorer the household.

Example:

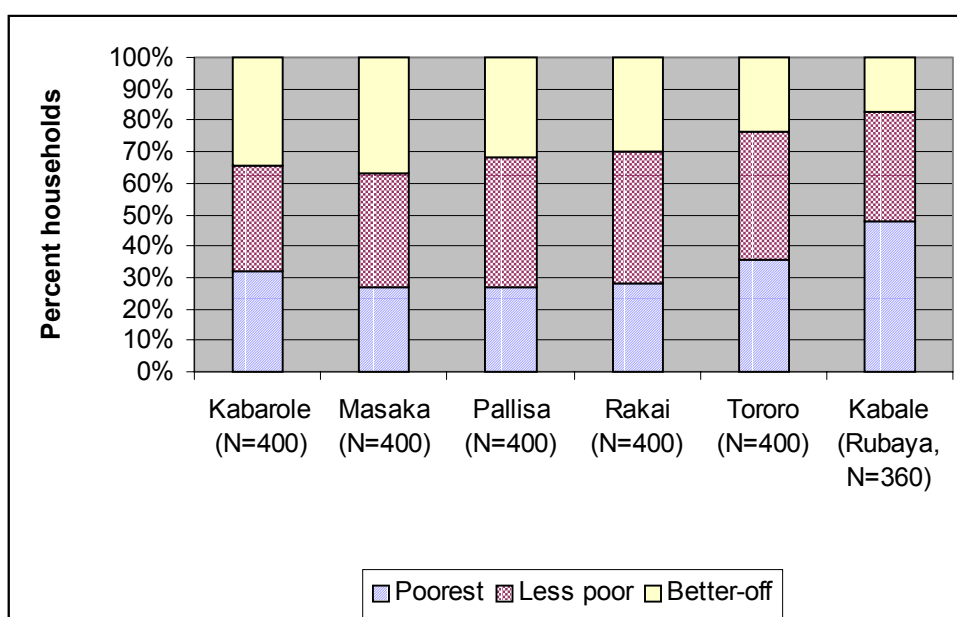
Indicator	Score	Description
Food	33	Have not experienced a period of food shortage within the last year
	67	Have experienced a period of food shortage within the last year which lasted less than two months or which lasted longer, but the only recourse that was taken was eating less meat or using farm products rather than buying so much or buying food.
	100	Have experienced a period of food shortage within the last year which lasted two months or more

The scores of the 13 indicators were added up, and the average score calculated as the poverty index number for the household.

For comparative reasons the same indicators were used for the Rubaya survey, except the two on dressing and schooling, where the averages for the other districts were used as dummy variables.

## 2.2 The different faces of poverty

The first and most basic result of the comparison of poverty in Rubaya with that of the five other districts, is the confirmation of Rubaya peoples relative poverty! (Figure 2.1 and Table 2.1) Based on the same poverty index, the same indicators, the *poorest* group in Rubaya sub-county comprise almost half of the population, while it reaches at most just over one third in the poorest of the five other districts (Tororo). And this is mainly at the expense of the *better-off* at 17% in Rubaya against 24% in Tororo and 30% or more in the other four districts.



**Figure 2.1 Poverty distribution in Rubaya sub county and five representative Ugandan districts (% households belonging to the poorest, the less poor and the better-off)**

**Table 2.1 Poverty distribution in Rubaya sub county and five representative Ugandan districts**

**(% households belonging to the poorest, the less poor and the better-off)**

Poverty level	% of households					Rubaya, (N=360)
	Kabarole (N=400)	Masaka (N=400)	Pallisa (N=400)	Rakai (N=400)	Tororo (N=400)	
Better-off	35	37	32	30	24	17
Less poor	34	37	42	42	41	35
Poorest	32	27	27	28	36	48

An analysis of the structure of poverty in Rubaya and the five districts reveals that they score quite differently on certain of the indicators on which the poverty index is built, and more



similarly on others. Thus it is mainly a few indicators that contribute to the deeper poverty in Rubaya than elsewhere, ie relatively very low scores on non-agricultural incomes and food security. Land fragmentation is there, but not worse than in some other districts, and less unequally distributed. Rubaya is even in a better situation than other districts on some indicators, such as housing.

## 2.3 Poverty and non-agricultural incomes

While most sources focus on agricultural problems as the cause of poverty in Kabale, this analysis then points to lack of non-agricultural activities as an important contributor. According to table 2.2 more than two thirds of all households in Rubaya have no income to supplement agriculture, while in Rakai and Masaka district only one third depends only on agriculture, and in the other three districts less than 45% do not have a non-agricultural income. While 19% of Rubaya's households get an income from the formal sector (wage employment, major trade or transport business etc.), this is achieved by 19-35% in the other districts, whereas for the informal sector (crafts, selling firewood or local brew, small businesses etc.) the difference is even bigger, as it employs only 13% of the households in Rubaya against 23%-37% in the other districts.

**Table 2.2 Non-agricultural sources of income by sector in Rubaya subcounty and five representative Ugandan districts**

Non-agric sources of income	% of households					
	Kabarole (390)	Masaka (399)	Pallisa (400)	Rakai (396)	Tororo (388)	Rubaya (359)
Formal Sector	35	35	26	33	19	<b>19</b>
Informal Sector	23	31	34	36	37	<b>13</b>
None	42	34	41	31	44	<b>68</b>
Total	100	100	101	100	100	<b>100</b>

Table 2.3 shows that engagement is low in Rubaya in all the different activities yielding non-agricultural incomes, and that it does not seem limited to certain sectors. Possibly the only exception is wage labour, to a large extent comprising professional jobs in the public sector, where Rubaya is at the same level as the districts.

**Table 2.3 Non-agricultural sources of income by specific sources in Rubaya subcounty and five representative Ugandan districts**

Non-agric. sources of income	% of households					
	Kabarole (390)	Masaka (399)	Pallisa (400)	Rakai (396)	Tororo (388)	Rubaya (359)
Permanent jobs e.g teacher, agricultural advisor, nurse etc.	20	13	10	10	9	11
Business e.g. transport, wholesale etc.	9	18	16	17	6	7
Crafts, tailoring, carpentry, building etc.	20	27	11	38	22	9
Selling bricks, firewood, charcoal, fish etc.	6	17	22	16	15	5
Selling local brew	12	11	25	23	23	6
Small shop, bar or clinic	13	15	7	15	7	5
Selling cooked food e.g chapatis, boiled eggs, cassava	7	10	5	9	6	1

Table 2.4, comparing non-agricultural sources of income in the 6 out of 8 parishes in Rubaya sub-county, where the survey took place, shows Bigaaga and Kitooma sub-counties ahead in both the formal and the informal sectors, Rwanyena in the informal sector, and Kahungye, Karujanga and Buramba are behind. There are no obvious geographical reasons for these differences.

**Table 2.4 Non-agricultural sources of income by specific sources in 6 parishes in Rubaya subcounty**

Non-agric. sources of income	% of households in parishes					
	Rwanyena (60)	Kahungye (60)	Karujanga (60)	Bigaaga (59)	Kitooma (60)	Buramba (60)
Permanent jobs e.g teacher, agricultural advisor, nurse etc.	8	13	7	19	12	7
Business e.g. transport, wholesale etc.	5	3	7	14	12	3
Crafts, tailoring, carpentry, building etc.	13	2	2	10	12	15
Selling bricks, firewood, charcoal, fish etc.	7	5	2	-	7	8
Selling local brew	10	7	2	10	8	2
Small shop, bar or clinic	3	2	7	15	8	2
Selling cooked food e.g chapatis, boiled eggs, etc.	2	-	-	3	-	-

There are a number of district -, and even sub county based NGO and private sector institutions that try to promote non-agricultural activities.<sup>3</sup> The main forms of support to non-agricultural activities are:

- Capacity building in business development, micro finance management, farm business management, which is given directly to beneficiaries. In one organization, the Private sector Promotion Center Ltd in Kabale town, the training had to be paid for by the beneficiaries. In some cases services are offered through intermediary institutions, which would then work directly with communities.
- Micro finance services, where small business loans are given to individuals, either as individuals or in recognized groups. This usually also include capacity building. In the village, where Rubaya sub county headquarter is located, a Village bank provides loans, and as an institution seeks support form other donors, including government.

The Village bank is a locally owned financial institution that has potential to influence other public and private sector institutions to increase its lending capital. The Village bank also has linkages with some local savings and credit groups – but still only few of those groups mentioned in section 4 below. Despite the presence of such micro finance institutions at all levels, their influence on the non agricultural sector in the community is still small, given the fact that the community's ability to invest competes with their ability to meet basic household needs such as health, food, and school fees.

The types of non-agricultural activities supported include: textile and embroidery, carpentry, welding, metal fabrication, shops, second hand clothes, repairs of bicycles, grain milling, brewing, charcoal burning, produce trade, hair salons, brick making, crafts (baskets, mats), beekeeping, bicycle transport, tailoring, making of snacks, drug store, and baking.

Each of the enterprises above is not particularly widely practiced, and then mostly in places close to small towns such as Katuna border town and Kabale town. They are practiced individually, but groups are important especially when accessing loans, as group members act as guarantees.

General constraints mentioned for operating non-agricultural income activities (especially among women) include:

- Most commonly lack of markets and sufficient demand for the products, poor product prices and lack of market information.. This affected borrowers ability to service their loans in time;
- Credit amounts given by lending institutions are too small and of too short duration to invest in serious business enterprises (so instead people end up investing the funds in agriculture – as mentioned by the village bank, whose grace period is up to 6 months. There seems also to be a high potential in dealing in dry agricultural produce such as beans, maize, millet sorghum and others);

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<sup>3</sup> Interviews were held with 5 organizations that supported the non agricultural income activities, and with 5 individuals who practiced them.

- Some businesses, such as brewing, are seasonal, with demand concentrated around harvest time when people are selling off their produce;
- In case of crafts businesses, the main constraint again was the very marginal profits and lack of materials.
- Lack of interest from the young members of the community.

Financial institutions so far have very little capacity in aspects of poverty and gender targeting as well as networking with the local savings and credit institutions. For the local credit and savings groups, skills such as lobbying, resource mobilization, financial management, networking, leadership, group-based decision-making and others are virtually non existing. Support to such groups would require using a participatory approach to retain local ownership and avoiding structural damage to their traditional functioning.

Besides lack of non-agricultural incomes, poverty in Rubaya is also often related to the widespread migration of males to other Ugandan districts, which is also a historical phenomenon. Besides tradition, the lack of sources of cash incomes are often the cause of migration. However it of course also reduces demand for those goods and services on which development of non-agricultural sources of income would depend.

**Table 2.5 Poverty level, migration and sex of head of household in Rubaya subcounty**

Migration and sex of head of household	% of households per poverty level			
	Total (360)	Better-off (62)	Less poor (131)	Poorest (167)
Man living in the house	<b>68</b>	82	75	57
Absentee husband supporting family	<b>15</b>	16	15	14
Absentee husband not supporting family	<b>6</b>	-	2	12
Woman (or child)	<b>12</b>	2	8	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	100	100	100

sign at 0.001 level

Table 2.5 shows that 1/5 of all households in Rubaya have a migrant male head of household, which together with those totally without a male head means that 1/3 of all the households are de facto female led! Among the *poorest* households more than ¼ are headed by a migrant, and thus nearly half do not in reality have a resident male head! More than 2/3 of all migrants do support their family, but among the *poorest* it is only just over half.

## 2.4 Food insecurity and food crops as cash crops

The other poverty indicator which really places Rubaya at the very low end, is food insecurity (Table 2.6). While in four of the other five districts about 40% of the households had not experienced a period of food shortage in the preceding year, the exception being Rakai district with only 26%, there was only a meager 14% of all households in Rubaya who had enough food in the 12 months before the interview (which by the way were not regarded as particularly bad!). Both those experiencing food shortage for more than two months and those with shorter periods of shortage were more in Rubaya, but especially the latter group were even twice as many as in three of the other districts.

**Table 2.6 Food shortage in Rubaya subcounty and five representative Ugandan districts**

Period of food shortage	% of households					
	Kabarole (N=384)	Masaka (N=364)	Pallisa (N=376)	Rakai (N=356)	Tororo (N=397)	Rubaya (N=355)
<b>None</b>	44	37	46	26	41	<b>14</b>
<b>&lt; 2 months</b>	17	18	22	29	19	<b>36</b>
<b>&gt; 2 months</b>	39	45	32	45	40	<b>50</b>
<b>Total</b>	100	100	100	100	100	<b>100</b>

Kabale is not, however, an area characterized by widespread agricultural disasters, such as prolonged droughts, although it has been subject to a certain soil degradation. It is not unlikely, though, that the prevalence of food insecurity is related to the dependence on food crops for cash incomes, the historical background of which is so vividly described by Carswell (Carswell 2002a). While most other districts have developed their place in the Ugandan export crop syndrome, where food and export crops have quite different roles, the colonial effort to introduce export crops in Kabale was never very successful in replacing the central place of food crops in a regional food crop marketing network, and thus their overlapping roles in the local production system.

**Table 2.7 Crops grown and sold by poverty level in Rubaya sub county**

Crops grown and sold	% of households growing the crop				% of households selling the crop			
	Total (357)	Better-off (62)	Less poor (130)	Poorest (165)	Total (357)	Better- off (62)	Less poor (130)	Poorest (165)
Beans	<b>95</b>	98	98	91	<b>29</b>	42	26	26
S. Potatoes	<b>91</b>	95	91	89	<b>few</b>	few	few	few
Sorghum	<b>87</b>	89	91	84	<b>64</b>	68	72	56
Maize	<b>64</b>	79	68	56	<b>few</b>	few	few	few
I. Potatoes	<b>55</b>	74	59	45	<b>29</b>	50	32	19
Peas	<b>49</b>	68	52	39	<b>15</b>	21	19	10
Bananas	<b>29</b>	35	28	27	<b>few</b>	few	few	few
Millet	<b>23</b>	34	22	19	<b>few</b>	few	few	few
Cabbage	<b>20</b>	37	19	13	<b>few</b>	few	few	few
Sell no crops	<b>na</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>29</b>

Notes: - Few= less than 20% in all three poverty categories.

Table 2.7 shows that all the crops grown by at least 20% of the households were grown both for own consumption and for marketing of surpluses. Beans, Sweet Potatoes and Sorghum, are grown by almost everybody, while a variety of other crops are grown by many farmers, the *better-off* having somewhat greater variety than the *poorest*. Most farmers also sell food crops. Even among the *poorest* households alone, less than 30% do not sell any crops at all.

Sorghum is sold by 2/3 of all households. Strictly speaking it is not really a food crop, as it is used mainly for the local brew, and one may say as an export crop, as large quantities are sold to other districts – and to Rwanda for brewing. Of course it contributes to food security whether taken as food or beer. No other crop is sold by more than 30% of the households, indicating that they are grown mainly for food, only occasional surpluses being sold, or that when money are needed households may sell out of a choice of foods stored – or whatever is stored!. Many informants indicated, however, that food stores had become less widespread as people sell more and more of their harvests immediately<sup>4</sup>. Peas and Beans are traditional food crops, which with easy transport were sold early to markets in Kampala and Rwanda (Carswell 2002a ). Irish potatoes is a newer food crop, developed particularly for cash. Having also cash costs, it is produced in greater quantities that are sold mainly by the *better-off*<sup>5</sup>.

In the survey in the second half of 2002 Sweet potatoes were not mentioned as an important cash crop. However in early 2003 the story was frequently told of how shortage of bananas in Mbarara had created a market for Sweet potatoes, which was exploited by Rubaya'ans, who uprooted their crop and sold it (Precipitating the risk of food shortage).

<sup>4</sup> Eg Interview with ex-mutongole Selapio Katarahweire, Karambo 28-6-03

<sup>5</sup> The CARE FIP supported Irish Potato groups interviewed inevitably stated their purpose to be production for food – and cash.

The survey also showed that most households (84%) over the last two seasons had bought some food crops, especially the *poorest* (87%) and the *less poor* (89%). Fewer *better-off* people resorted to buying food crops (66%). Furthermore the *poorest* bought mainly typical “hunger crops” such as maize and beans, while supplementary bananas, Irish potatoes and vegetables were more in demand by the *better-off* group.

**Table 2.8 Crops bought for food in Rubaya subcounty**

<b>Crops bought</b>	<b>Bought by % of households that buy any food crops</b>			
	<b>Total</b> (303)	<b>Better-off</b> (41)	<b>Less poor</b> (116)	<b>Poorest</b> (146)
<b>Buy food crops**</b> (% of all households)	<b>84</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>87</b>
Maize*	<b>86</b>	71	86	90
Beans**	<b>80</b>	56	77	90
Bananas <sup>ns</sup>	<b>33</b>	44	35	28
Irish Potatoes <sup>ns</sup>	<b>29</b>	24	30	29
Vegetables <sup>ns</sup>	<b>16</b>	18	17	14

ns=not significant

\*=sign at 0.05 level

\*\*=sign at 0.001 level

Clearly food insecurity in Rubaya is not just a result of low harvests, but is also connected to lack of or insufficient cash incomes, in which case promotion of cash crops or non-agricultural income generating activities may be adequate strategies, especially for the poor.

## 2.5 Land pressure and fragmentation

Deepening poverty in Kabale is often linked to declining farm size due to population growth and intensified exploitation of all available arable land. Recent research indicates, however, that in large parts of Kabale district available land was under human use already by the middle of last century (except for the swamps that have since been drained), and that population increase has not necessarily led to less fallowing and deforestation (Lindeblade et al. 1996, Grisley & Mwesigwa 1993, Breyer et al. 1997, see also below).

Comparing with other parts of Uganda also shows, that not only is the population actually growing slower in Kabale than elsewhere (see AHI 1997b), land distribution is also not much more skewed in Rubaya than in the five districts we have been comparing with.

According to table 2.9, the 25% of households in Rubaya sub-county that own less than an acre (0.4 ha) of land are a little less than the same group in Kabarole and Masaka, but more than in Pallisa, Rakai and Tororo. The middle group owning 1-5 acres (0.4-2 ha) at 64% in Rubaya is slightly smaller than in Rakai, but bigger than in the other four districts. It is clear however that the non-availability of unused land in Rubaya is demonstrated by the 11% larger landowners compared to between 17 and 27% in the other districts owning more than 5 acres (2ha) land.

**Table 2.9 Land distribution in five representative Ugandan districts and Rubaya sub-county**

Land area owned	% of households					
	Kabarole (398)	Masaka (400)	Pallisa (400)	Rakai (394)	Tororo (399)	Rubaya (347)
> 5 acres	20	17	27	17	28	<b>11</b>
1 – 5 acres	51	57	58	69	56	<b>64</b>
< 1 acre	29	26	16	14	17	<b>25</b>
Total	100	100	101	100	101	<b>100</b>

The more equal distribution of landownership in Rubaya than in the other districts, perhaps with the exception of Rakai, does not mean, however, that Rubaya escapes a skewed land ownership pattern, as demonstrated by table 2.10.

**Table 2.10 Land ownership in Rubaya sub-county**

Land area owned	% of households			
	Total (347)	Better-off (61)	Less poor (126)	Poorest (160)
> 5 Acres	<b>11</b>	28	14	3
1 – 5 acres	<b>64</b>	70	71	56
< 1 acre	<b>25</b>	2	14	41
Total	<b>100</b>	100	99	100

significant at 0.001 level

Most strikingly, as many as 41% of the *poorest* households own less than 1 acre of land and only 3% of them have more than 5 acres, while the less than 1 acre group among the *better-off* reach only 2%. On the other hand the fact that only just over ¼ of even the *better-off* own more than 5 acres is a clear indicator that non-availability of unused land together with inheritance rules prevents accumulation of land.

Unlike many other parts of Africa and Uganda allocation and opening up of common or public, unused land does not feature among the ways farmers in Rubaya have acquired their land, which is either inherited or bought. (Table 2.11). Virtually everybody has inherited land, indicating that all sons inherit, and consequently landlessness, and most likely also migration into or within Rubaya, are almost non-existent. Many households have increased their inheritance by buying land, even more than half of the *poorest* households, and renting land to supplement what is owned is also widespread, particularly among the *poorest*<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> The very closely contested demand for supplementary land is visible in the renting pattern where people prefer to rent out land rather than selling, and can also be seen from the fact that the many farmers - and womens groups that have been started in recent years to benefit from agricultural interventions, have had to rely on renting a plot of land for their group activities, rather than group members contributions or allocations from public land.



**Table 2.11 Land acquisition in Rubaya sub-county**

Ways of acquiring land	% of households			
	Total (349)	Better-off (62)	Less poor (128)	Poorest (159)
Inheritance <sup>ns</sup>	<b>91</b>	95	91	90
Buying <sup>**</sup>	<b>65</b>	92	70	51
Renting <sup>ns</sup>	<b>39</b>	29	39	43

ns=not significant

\*=sign at 0.05 level

\*\*=sign at 0.001 level

Universal inheritance among sons together with population increase and widespread buying and renting of land, as in Rubaya, is normally regarded as having a negative land fragmentation effect, in terms of lack of economies of scale and long traveling distances to and from fields.

**Table 2.12 Land fragmentation: Average no of strips of land per household in Rubaya subcounty.**

Poverty level	Strips located in this village	Strips located in other village	Strips of land owned	Strips fallowed	Strips rented in a season	Strips of land cultivated
<b>Better-off</b>	5.35	3.69	<b>9.08</b>	1.60	0.53	<b>8.01</b>
<b>Less poor</b>	4.31	1.92	<b>6.27</b>	0.68	0.68	<b>6.27</b>
<b>Poorest</b>	2.86	1.03	<b>3.93</b>	0.22	0.70	<b>4.41</b>
<b>Total</b>	3.82	1.81	<b>5.67</b>	0.62	0.66	<b>5.71</b>

Most land in Rubaya is divided into plots marked by bunds, thus identified as particular strips on a terrace. Table 2.12 indicates that a certain degree of land fragmentation exists in Rubaya.

Considering their different amounts of land, overall fragmentation of cultivated land is not strikingly different between the *poorest* and the *better-off*, but the latter have a relatively larger part of their land located in another village.

In qualitative interviews farmers did not grossly complain about land fragmentation though. On the contrary farmers stressed the importance of having land on differing types of soil, which is typically connected with location on either upper or lower slopes, or reclaimed valley land. Even location in different villages can give advantage of varying micro climates or protection against location specific pest attacks. There were also examples of farmers exchanging strips of land.

## **2.6 Rubaya is not poorest in all respects – and it has development potentials**

This section has analysed the high level of poverty existing in Rubaya sub-county compared to five representative Ugandan districts, as well as its special composition in terms of the poverty indicators which are particularly characteristic for poverty in Rubaya. It should also be mentioned, however, that there are some indicators on which Rubaya households is in a more

favourable position than is generally the case elsewhere. One particular example is housing, which is much more equally distributed in Rubaya than in the other districts, as shown in table 2.13.

**Table 2.13 Poverty level and type of housing in five representative Ugandan districts and Rubaya sub county**

Types of housing	% of households					
	Kabarole (400)	Masaka (400)	Pallisa (400)	Rakai (398)	Tororo (400)	Rubaya (360)
Brick wall <u>and</u> Iron roof	11	43	16	19	18	<b>4</b>
Brick wall <u>or</u> Iron roof	78	40	79	54	67	<b>93</b>
Mud wall and thatched	12	17	6	27	15	<b>3</b>
<b>Total</b>	101	100	101	100	100	<b>100</b>

In Rubaya only 3% of all households live in houses with mud walls and thatched roof (or in need of major repairs) while 93% have houses with *either* brick walls or iron roof (a visual survey gives the impression that it is overwhelmingly the latter). In the other districts between 6 and 27% of the households live in lower quality housing.

In conclusion, the poverty analysis has shown that Rubaya *is really poor* compared to other parts of Uganda, especially because of its constrained non-agricultural sector, and that people are making up for that by selling food crops, which to some extent endangers their own food security.

It is also clear, however, that although accumulation of land and livestock is less than elsewhere, there is still social differentiation, which, as shown below, has repercussions for farmers' agricultural and livelihood strategies, as well as their abilities to respond to agricultural interventions.

A rural livelihoods framework suggests that there are different capital assets upon which rural livelihoods depend in order to invoke different livelihood strategies, including: natural capital, physical capital, financial capital, human capital and social capital. Communities therefore may at different times succeed to increase any of these capitals resulting in improved livelihoods, while in other cases certain capitals are limiting, and accessing them is also difficult.

In Rubaya sub-county sale of agricultural products was the main source of financial capital, while non-agricultural incomes, an important financial asset in other areas, contributed little in the sub-county. In the livelihoods framework it is suggested that social capital in the form of rich processes and structures can replace financial capital as basis for livelihood strategies. In the social capital, focus is on groups and institutions, vertical and horizontal linkages between the different groups and institutions and the values/norms that govern those linkages.

The analysis below will reveal that Rubaya is endowed with a – for such a poor area surprisingly – rich and vibrant local civil society, which is also a potential link to larger institutions – developmental or financial in nature. A civil society that does mirror the social differentiation, but which still encompasses the poorer sections of society.

New civil society structures have mushroomed in recent years, because of new opportunities, partly opened by interventions like CARE FIP. They also seem to enhance further the basis for agricultural innovation – which also contrary to expectations appear to have been existing for a long time.

### **3. Civil society and community planning**

As discussed in the introduction, much development thinking in recent years, including the conceptualisation of CARE's Farmer Innovations Project in Kabale, Uganda, has been premised on the importance of civil society capacity development as a prerequisite for economic and technological development.

Civil society capacity development in rural Africa basically involves enabling the local people to better define their development needs, to pursue them individually and collectively, and to demand the required external support from service providers, whether government or private sector.

This study has found how even a remote, poor area like Rubaya –over one to two decades –has been the subject of several external interventions, such as FIP, but also government reforms, that have aimed to achieve this by introducing sustainable, decentralised, participatory, and community based planning processes. Such interventions have been sustainable, decentralised, participatory and community based more or less whole heartedly. They have also succeeded to different degrees in enabling communities to identify the character of the crisis, its causes and potential remedies, in terms of developing their production systems, food security and incomes, as well as service provision, as seen by all stakeholders, including the poor farmers and the women.

This section addresses the issues related to the participatory planning processes that have been introduced in Rubaya. Description and analysis is provided on the major outcomes of the planning processes in terms of: the definition of development needs, pursuit of solutions individually or collectively, and demand for external services. The section also describes the institutional distribution in the sub county, their structure, functions, and contribution to solving the land management and poverty crisis in the area with or without the plans.

These institutions do include outsider organizations that can provide services to the communities. The outsider organizations include national and international governmental and non-governmental organizations involved in promoting community based planning, technology development and other development activities, and thus in civil society strengthening.

The sub county of Rubaya has in the last 20 years experienced introduction of a number of different community planning processes, some of them in all areas, while others have been specific to some areas only. The planning approaches have included Local Council (LC1) or village planning meetings with no outsider involvement; Government led participatory planning activities, including planning specific for the NAADS program; Institutional led community planning activities such as the CARE FIP approaches, but also those introduced by other NGOs. For the purpose of appreciating each of them, a brief description is provided below, that will focus on key planning principles and practices of each, in addition to which a general analytical section is presented for all of the forms of planning. The following analytical section, discusses the dynamics, the outcomes, constraints, and implications for methods that enable communities and support institutions to generate improved planning processes.

**Box 3.1: Pre local council planning.** Interview with ex-*mutongole* Selapio Katarahweire and his wife. Karambo 28-6-03.

Katarahweire had worked in Kilembe mines, before joining the government service from 1970-90, latest as acting parish chief. He had been 1 of 2 *abatongole* (village headmen) below a parish chief, having about 400 taxpayers (landowners). The work was to assess and collect graduated tax and fees. Keep account of permanent houses and shops. Assure houses had toilets, terraces were maintained, and keep track of no of schoolchildren, orphans, household sizes, food security, people of old age and their status. He had to mobilise people for timely planting and to ensure they had sufficient food and seed stocks before selling crops. He also scheduled drinking hours.

In his days they had meetings to plan community activities for the whole Valley. They agreed on what crops to grow, and the timing of planting, e.g. to avoid rat attacks. The local landowners and their wives would participate, organised by their clan leaders. They also organised road works and bush clearing.

Other planning meetings were held by the authorities for sub county, with parish and village leaders to inform them on health, soil conservation, and vaccination campaigns etc.

In general meetings communities could decide e.g. if they did not like the parish chief, or on such things as terrace conservation and fines.

### 3.1 Local council led village planning

For most of the communities, the *local council or village planning* started way back in 1988/89 after the present National Resistance Movement (NRM) government had taken over power, and

based on its experience with decentralized local power during the civil war. The NRM government had instituted what was known as Resistance Councils (RCs) at village level with hierarchy up to district level. The purpose of these RCs (1-5) was to ensure local security and spearhead local development initiatives.

The RCs, which later were renamed Local Councils (LCs), had a committee of nine representatives including a women representative. These councils had the role of engaging the rest of the community in discussion or forming solutions around community problems. It's this kinds of planning activities that presently cut across the entire sub-county, having been a requirement of government.

The local council decision making and planning procedures varied from one village to another in some aspects, but for most of them they had a common procedure. The meetings, which are meant to be attended by the entire community once a month, are chaired by the Local Council Committee Chairperson. Most of the villages visited in Rubaya sub county had held such meetings 2 -3 times a year. The meetings' procedures typically go through the following formal and substantial procedure:

- (i) Singing of the National anthem
  - (ii) Setting of the agenda. Normally the LC1 committee has an agenda for the day, but the community may add to it.
  - (iii) Issues on the agenda are discussed.
  - (iv) A voting system that involves show of hands is some times used to decide on specific issues.
  - (v) For specific activities, the meeting assigns tasks to individuals e.g. when there is a need to work on a community road. Different individuals are given specific task or portions to work on with deadlines given for specific activities to be accomplished.
- (See box 3.2)

**Box 3.2 A Local council led village planning in Habugarama village Kitooma parish**

A Local council led village planning process that succeeded in enlisting community wide participation to address two serious problems: repairs on an access road and repairs on the community well.

The village planning had the following steps:

1. The problem was discussed by the LC1 executive
2. The whole LC1, i.e. village community was called for a meeting to discuss the importance of water and the road.
3. Discussed the plans for building the wells.
4. Shared a budget and collected contributions from the community members.
5. Contributions were made and construction materials bought

In such a meeting an agenda guides the deliberations, some resistance was met with the community on the road construction, because the government had earlier promised to work

on it, but failed. The community did not see the reason to make contributions towards road development. According to the informants, contributions towards the water project were fairly easy to agree on.

Finally the community did consent to both and to contribute labour and tools, but demanded that the Chairman provides the refreshments. The 25% tax refund, villages get on graduated tax collections, was the source of support to get the refreshments as the projects progressed.

However, the community members eventually contributed some supplementary items towards the projects: the women gave food items, and some financial contributions were also made towards the water project. In this case a sub committee from among the ordinary community members, was charged with the collection of the support funds. These were needed to supplement the contributions from the diocese of Kigezi which provided cement, a mason and the pipes.

The deliberations in the meeting were minuted. The implementation involved the entire community, but with the village chairman as overall supervisor.

The overall result was evaluated by community members to be not only that the community obtained a clean source of water and a road, but also increased cohesiveness and unity in the village, as well as increased interest and enthusiasm towards community wide activities, including agricultural development ones.

### **3.2 Local government annual participatory community planning processes**

In spite of this previous government introduced form of planning discussed above, another form was introduced nation wide by government under the Local Government Development Project (LGDP) in 1999. The LGDP is a project under the Ministry of Local Government that is promoting community based planning under the decentralization system. The plans are developed at the village level using guiding procedures and forms relayed to them from the government through the Sub-county. After filling in the forms in the LC1, a copy is sent to the sub county (LC3), while one is retained at the parish (LC2) and one stays at the village.

The purpose of this form of planning is to have grass root community development requirements and priorities incorporated in a three-year sub-county plan. After planning, the village priorities are considered at parish level and the parish priorities forwarded to the sub-county. The sub-county plans would then be financed by either the LGDP or the PMA non-sectoral conditional grants allocated to the sub county. Those planned projects that cannot be funded at the sub county level are then forwarded to the district to be addressed in a 3 year district plan by the district planning unit.

Since the community planning follow a participatory approach, capacity is supposed to be built for the local council executive to conduct such planning meetings for the community. However, among the communities visited in Rubaya by the research team, few had received the training or proper explanation on how to use the received forms in facilitating the planning process. The ideal process of conducting the community planning is meant to be as follows:

- The Parish chief delivers the forms to the LC1 chairperson
- The forms are brought to the community, and explained to the communities in a village council meeting.
- The community identifies what needs to be done i.e. list 8 issues they would wish be solved
- Prioritisation of the major issues is done
- The issues to be addressed by the village using locally available resources are identified to be taken, care of through the earlier described local council planning.
- Items to be supported from else where are budgeted for (In most villages this was left to the LC executive committee )
- The names of the community members present are attached to the report as a sign of their approval and an indication of a participatory exercise conducted.
- One third of all who attend must be women
- The plans are then taken to the Parish chief.
- The parish chief then forwards them to the sub county
- The sub-county council prioritises and comes up with a 3 year sub-county development plan.

### **3.3 The NAADS form of community planning**

In 2001 a new National Agricultural Advisory Services system was introduced in Uganda, basically meant to privatise extension service and facilitate linkages between communities and the private extension providers. From November 2001 Kabale was selected one of the NAADS “trail blazing districts”, with Rubaya as one of the initial sub counties. The new decision making organ at sub county level, the NAADS Farmers Forum was in place with 2 members from each Parish from late 2001.

In March 2002 African Highlands Initiative (AHI) was contracted to be the service provider for introduction of NAADS in Rubaya., providing a sub county county NAADS coordinator, 5 senior community facilitators and 17 junior community facilitators, who were now paid from the NAADS contract, while before they had worked as AHI volunteers in their communities.<sup>7</sup>

The process started with sensitisation and training at sub county level of sub county and parish govt personnel, political, church, and school leaders, farmers forum members and community facilitators, about NAADS, and training in facilitation, gender mainstreaming, group formation, work plan development, enterprise selection, and visioning and planning.. This was done by AHI, with participation in workshops from AFRENA, Africare, Africa 2000, CIAT , IITA-

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<sup>7</sup> Information from AHI/NAADS reports (progress report and workshop proceedings March to July 2002) availed to us at the AHI Kabale office.

foodnet and others. CARE seems to have been conspicuously absent or present only as observers.

It then continued with sub county and parish leaders doing community sensitisation at parish level and AHI community facilitators sensitising villages and training groups. A group inventory was made eventually comprising some 2-300 existing groups and a similar number of groups established to connect with NAADS.

By October almost 500 groups were registered as NAADS groups, 397 of which had selected preferred enterprises and submitted work plans (40-60 per parish). Group membership was 10 000 of which 2/3 were female! Group objectives, besides attracting support to enterprises included: increase food production and food security, eradicate poverty, lend money, storage for consumption, assist disabled and orphans, improve farming, increase farm production, and promote social and economic development, savings and credit, burial ceremony and stretcher groups, brick making. (See below under groups).

AHI complained that the planning was hampered by of lack of coordination and support from sub county leadership and several cases of delay of payments to itself and service providers because of demand for “kickbacks”. It was also constrained by initial perceptions of farmers that NAADS was there to help them get money for community groups (NAADS had initially given money to meeting participants); get inputs, as from PMA non-sectoral conditional grants; information on service providers; and NAADS training.

By May service providers for fisheries, on farm technology and adult literacy were contracted, based on information generated by community facilitators about services needed by groups. From June and the next three months the community facilitators (AHI employed) would focus on participatory visioning and planning for the many groups that had been registered. Their priority work plans then became the basis for sub county planning and contracting of service providers for Irish potatoes and beans Parish center demonstrations. (See further in the sections about groups and extension below).

### **3.4 Community based participatory planning facilitated by CARE FIP**

CARE FIP has been facilitating community based planning since early 2002 as the first part of its approach to improved production and food security. The organization has used two approaches beginning with a so-called visioning approach which was applied to 10 villages and later after realizing the very lengthy process involved, adjusted to a more traditional problem based approach (MTR, 2002).



The first approach involved that the community was divided into groups of women, men and youth, each to come out with a plan. The three plans were then integrated into one village plan. The major participatory process (MTR 2002) included:

- Sensitization and explanation of planning process by FIP facilitators
- Situational analysis
- Preparation of resource maps
- Developing of a past change matrix
- Development of a desired change matrix
- Activity plan

The CARE FIP facilitated activity plan normally included:

- The activities
- The resources for the activities.
- The sources / location of the resources.
- The time frame.
- Monitoring

This new visioning planning system often took the following guided (by CARE FIP facilitators) form<sup>8</sup>:

- CARE FIP invites the entire community to the meeting. In this meeting the CARE Staff share with the community about what CARE FIP is about.
- In the same meeting visionary development planning or articulation is conducted for the 5 years before and to come, including looking at development changes in the last 5 years and development goals for the next 5 years.
- The CARE FIP staff lead the community into a series of planning activities which last for 3 days including final group formation for implementation.
- CARE FIP does encourage the community to try out possible development activities as a unit.
- The project points out that the development activities need to be undertaken in groups . There is emphasis on priority areas to the community and group.

The visioning approach was later abandoned by CARE staff as being too tedious, and replaced by a problem solving approach to planning, which followed the procedure below:

- Resource mapping
- Problems/constraints identification
- Existing efforts to address the problems
- Possible solutions
- Prioritization of problems
- Development of an action plan by the interest groups(MTR, 2002)

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<sup>8</sup> Here as narrated in village meeting in Hakakingo village

As a result of the (MTR 2002), in the first quarter of 2003, FIP endeavored to both sensitize the Rubaya sub county leadership and strengthen its own CBP potential to contribute to local government community planning processes. An exchange visit was facilitated to Bubaale Sub County, which receives capacity building in community based planning from a UNDP funded programme. The key replicable aspects of the Bubaale CBP is the ease with which its plans are integrated into the local council planning activities, and the community to community training on CBP. In the same area, there was a focus on raising community village level planning facilitators who were important in scaling up the processes to own communities and beyond. A similar feature had been proposed by the FIP (MTR 2002)

### **3.5 Dynamics of the approaches to planning**

It should be noted that the planning interviews were conducted in areas where FIP had worked and areas where FIP had not yet worked. On the whole each village experienced not less than two forms of planning, the most common having been the Local council planning meetings and the annual community planning using the government (LGDP) forms. There were a few villages, which indicated that they had not planned using the government (LGDP) forms. This section analyses the unique developments that characterized the various planning processes.

#### *Items planned for*

In all the planning processes indicated above the issues discussed included: buying and selling of produce like sorghum; soil management; educating of children in the community as well as their welfare, including punishments for kids who do not go to school; provision of credit; the utilization of the 25% tax remittance to the villages. Some plans resulted into priorities like roads, water wells or improved sources, immunization programs, a health center for which one community had made bricks for, specific agricultural activities, such as experiments on maize, beans, irish potatoes, management of stray animals which is a serious problem in the area given the limited land and the culture of grazing animals in uncultivated fields. Such fields are surrounded by cultivated field risking them to grazing animals. Planning for agricultural activities was relatively new to most areas. In some of the FIP areas, farmers' priorities included soil erosion control and fertility management, and raising of tree seedlings. Most communities expected plans to include infrastructural works such as road construction and water resource management. These characterized most of the local council planning activities. Planning for conflict resolution was important in some areas, especially in local council meetings.

The choice by farmers in the community of what they wanted government or other institutions to provide seemed to hinge a lot on what they knew before or had been exposed to. This makes it very important to have an information provision and exposure stage to various options related to a specific priority or problematic area, similar to what the farmers are planning for. Video or film shows and exchange visits were methods that were used for this. This would facilitate informed

and non restrictive decisions by the farmers or the community as to the most appropriate options or interventions to try out.

#### *Attendance and participation in the meetings*

In most government related planning activities the turn up to the meetings was poor. The reason for this was the bad experience of non responsiveness by government to most community prepared government plans. The lack of feedback to the community about the fate of the communally made plans was a clearly discouraging factor.

This is probably explained as a failure on the part of the facilitators of government planning activities, as well as the local leaders, to explain clearly what benefits existed when the communities were involved in the planning processes, both for their own potential actions, and relating to what the plans served for in terms of contributing to the sub county plan. However the community was usually led to believe that their involvement in the government planning would result in immediate interventions - which was of course not the case.

Typically, in one community (Habugarama village) attendance for a government related planning activity was by representatives from 18 households out of 60 community households, contrasting with a 100% attendance in a meeting locally organized by the LC chairperson. The latter, as quoted above, resulted in the construction of a road and a well.

Attendance and participation in FIP planning activities seemed good, with cooperation from the majority of the community. This success can be explained by the expectation of follow up activities by FIP after the planning activities. In one of the first FIP villages, 45 out of 66 households attended the initial planning meeting. There were a few non participants even though CARE FIP had aimed at the entire community participating.

#### *Roles and responsibilities during and after the planning*

One of the key ingredients to a successful community planning exercise is usually good leadership, transparency and initiative. In all the different types/forms of planning in Rubaya, LC1 chairpersons held a central role. The LC1 chairperson and the committee mobilized the communities, moderated the meetings, undertook budgeting, and finalized the plans. They were further entrusted with purchase of materials for the work and supervising implementation activities.

Parallel leadership existed along side or independent of the LC executive leaders during the implementation of community plans, especially in the FIP activities and in the NAADS, involving the institutional staff in moderating the planning processes, as well as group leaders and Farmer Fora members.

Community members attended the meetings and contributed ideas including analyzing priorities, contributions in form of materials, food items and preparation of meals for those implementing particular activities, as well as collection of funds.

### *Benefits and outcomes of the planning activities*

The benefits and outcomes of the planning meetings were both social, institutional and material in nature. Despite widespread outcry on failure to see results and response to the government related planning processes, all the planning activities did yield a sense of achievement in some of the communities. There was appreciation of the ability to plan and make decisions both on joint community activities and on services government would be expected provide. The planning processes and particularly those followed with community wide action did yield increased cohesiveness and unity among the community members and also more willingness to get involved in further community wide activities.

Communities were then prepared to provide tools such as hoes and axes, food, and even money.

Benefits that were mentioned in several villages as emanating particularly from the FIP facilitated participatory planning include:

- Focus on the development goals of the area.
- Assessing the past and the present
- Map drawing and planning for future activities .
- Map helped them get to know their villages better.
- Breaking up in groups to consider unique needs
- Considering the problems of the village
- Discussing possible survival strategies
- Having to work together in groups and getting to know each other.
- Receiving support for what was planned
- Being able to contribute seed for the experimental plots.
- The exchange visits that were made.
- Having developed working relationships with CARE/FIP
- Have acquired knowledge and skills like establishing of tree seed beds, planting of Irish potatoes in lines.
- The two farmers groups were started
  - The soil management group.
  - The modern farming group (The entire village belongs to these 2 groups)
- The receiving of improved potatoe seed to compare with local ones.
- Learnt many things such as fish farming
- Bee keeping
- Have planted tree seed beds, irish potatoe experiments and are practicing modern farming and how to manage the land.
- The follow up system of FIP encourages participation of members.
- Households are developing and income increasing.
- Some groups are using some aspects of FIP planning process such as planning what to plant, the labour requirements, profits, etc.
- Groups are open to new members and ready to train them.

- Having to clean up, dress nicely to attend the meetings
- More lively exercise

Communities utilize the village meetings to sensitize colleagues that would not have participated in NGO related activities, including planning, to get involved. The FIP planning yielded farmer groups or interest groups. The role of these groups included implementing a specific agricultural activity such as soil management, Irish potato growing and tree nursery development; identifying local contributions, developing monitoring and evaluation schemes for their selected activity, develop bye laws to guide group activities. In a given community 2 -3 activity interest groups arose, with an average membership of 15 households. In some cases some people belonged to more than one interest or activity group.

One village (Kikingo, Karujanga parish) chose to do all the activities as a community and not in small activity groups. They organized that the learning be done in groups, but implementation be done by individuals on their fields.(See further in section 6 below)

Some of the groups managed to lobby their respective village leadership to have the entire community implement uniform land management bye laws.

### **3.6 Connectivity and ability to raise demand for services, action taken,**

In addition to attracting government activity and organising community action, one of the purposes of community planning, and particularly of that facilitated by FIP, has been to enable communities to identify their needs for support from non-government service providers.

The planning in itself has involved outsider institutions such as CARE FIP, the Diocese of Kigezi (usually supporting with professional labour and materials for water construction works), AMREF, while in some cases it has attracted support from other institutions as a form of networking to have needs met. However there was very little happening as far as linkage to service providers was concerned, emerging from local council and government led planning activities. The communities in fact considered a planning successful as long as the planned ideas had been implemented or responded to, mainly by government. One community, however, did use information heard from a successful project in another part of the district, to guide its planning process in accessing service.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Habugarama village utilizing information on Rubaya Integrated Development Project and Lake Bunyonyi Integrated Development Project

Also in the FIP project, there are few village – service provider linkages that have been developed as a result of the planning process, according to the informants. FIP has been the intervening institution in most of the community planned activities and their implementation. This is brought about by the need for quick response to the identified community demands, which more than often there is no obvious service provider to meet. The identification or search for service providers by the community tends to involve bureaucracies, delays and unavailability and sometimes lack of resources (human and material ) on the side of the sought or possible provider. For this reason very few other NGOs, CBOs or possible provider institutions have been involved in meeting community-based demands arising out of the community plans. There has been some links though, which are presently being further developed (see section 6 below).

Since the FIP community planning started in January 2002 there has not been any incorporation of the planned activities into the official village level plans. This has been due to the late start of the process, which did not synchronize with the official planning period. The official planning period starts in October and ends in December. There is however a likelihood that FIP community plans of the year 2002 would be incorporated into the official village plans, particularly as it was agreed that FIP would cooperate with the sub county in facilitating governments community based annual planning in 2003.

### **3.7 Analysis of constraints of and differences between the planning approaches**

There was a particular outcry related to the local government annual planning and NAADs planning process and in some cases the FIP planning processes. The first two had difficulties related to firstly the language used on the planning guiding forms. English was used which for a number of users was not supportive. There was need for interpretation or translation of the ideas for other to contribute. Secondly there were serious difficulties to learn the planning processes and procedures. Thirdly, government forms were delivered late and with no proper explanation of how to use them. An observation here is the failure to build local capacity to conduct own planning following the participatory and tool based planning.

Lack of feed back or response to the planning processes of government was another important discouragement to community involvement in government activities in general and in subsequent planning activities. The respondents also wanted feedback on how well they had filled in the forms. Lack of response to the forms filled in form of action and meeting the requests made.

The planning was therefore complicated and for NAADS it was even hurried for some of the groups. The Local Council committee tends to do a lot of work with no immediate reward from government, yet the parish chiefs who deliver and collect the forms are paid to do so. These village officials sometimes had to walk from house to house to establish baseline information about their communities with no facilitation.

The FIP planning difficulties according to the respondents/informants were related to the time consuming nature of the process, and communities have to write their plans. Since the planning involved considering aspects of the past that had implications for the present, some of the communities found this difficult. Recalling about the past events was not easy. The time spent planning was considered a misuse and would rather have been spent implementing or doing work on the groups. Those who did not know how to read and write found difficulties in participating. Some individuals found it hard to express themselves and share their desires in a large group of people.

The constraints met during the traditional planning process included community members being resistant and uncooperative. Implementation of community initiatives was constrained with lack of tools for working on the roads. There was a lot of difficulty for farmers to articulate the benefits/constraints of the process, it was rather easy to think about outcomes and constraints to implementing ideas.

There have been cases where leaders professing another religion have rejected the plans of a specific religion representation. The sub county therefore tries to look at all the raw planning materials from the villages to ensure that there is no exclusion of any community ideas.

Except for the local council planning, which was highly village leadership controlled, most of the other forms (Government, NAADS, CARE FIP) of planning lend themselves to some extent to formally participatory processes. The government planning processes and that of NAADS are also similar in the hierarchical requirements of the planning. In both forms, planning from the grassroots (village) is expected to contribute to the plans at the higher levels, i.e. parish and sub county. This implies that one of the purposes of the grassroots planning is to enable the communities to have a contribution to the upper level planning by contributing priority ideas which are then sieved into a parish, sub county and district plans.

It is known that participatory planning activities enlist a lot of expectations from those involved in planning especially the problem based planning but the visioning type too (cite). In both forms of planning (Government and NAADS), the grassroots participants were left with a lot of expectations for institutional interventions towards identified community solutions. There was a general outcry of the failure of the two forms of planning particularly the local government annual planning in addressing the requests made by the communities in the plans. There was however a difference between NAADS and the government planning. In NAADS, after groups were established, plans went directly from common interest groups to Parishes and further up. It is thus likely that some of the common interest groups would never have their interests addressed, as it is anticipated that the priorities of the sub county will be the ones to be implemented other than for specific groups.

In view of the limited resources available to both local government and NAADS compared with the usual expectations for tangible benefits, there seems to be little explanation by the facilitators

of the planning on how the community plans are handled up to the sub county level, how useful the process is, and what are the direct and indirect benefits of the community contributions to the planning process. If proper explanation was provided there would be less discouragement about the fact that the requests of the communities are not met.

It would actually be better that more effort be taken after the planning and group formation process to build the groups further so they can be able to see beyond the agricultural activities that the facilitators may suggest to them. Objective, visionary, cross cutting and multisectoral planning can help the communities and groups see beyond the immediate needs and problems and be able to seek on their own for opportunities elsewhere to address needs and potentials revealed by the planning process. The whole basis of community based participatory planning is that strong and visionary communities and groups are the key to grass roots development and indeed holistically address the needs of the members and the communities in which they live. However that basic premise is not realised.

The CARE FIP planning process resembled the local government annual planning in terms of the expected community wide participation in the planning and in some aspects the use of the visioning approach to planning. The length of the planning process of the FIP project however tended to be much longer than the others, to a degree at least creating a stronger sense of community ownership, and with more institutional follow up in the form of the formation of “loose” experimental groups, and the response to some of the needs identified in the planning. The NAADS planning did very little to enlist involvement by the whole community

All the three planning approaches above were institutional led, and entailed the use of experts in facilitating planning processes and under NAADS group formation. Even though the NAADS emphasizes strong groups the aspects of farmer group capacity building did not feature a lot. The groups other than being registered with NAADS did not portray strong group dynamics amongst themselves.

One FIP community mentioned that they found the drawing of the map easier with the FIP staff because they had already gone through it under the government planning activities. Otherwise it was observed that the informants were unable to make up any process differences and therefore advantages of any of the planning processes over the other. The basic judgement was based on whether the forms of planning had yielded any results or responses or not.

#### **4. Civil Society: local groups**

In Rubaya, like in most African rural areas, civil society until recently consisted largely of kinship institutions, the strength and cohesion of which were gradually eroded, at least outside the sphere of family privacy, in the face of subordination to, and penetration and replacement by,



official local structures. While official structures readily usurped regulative functions, social and economic functions beyond the relatively closely knit family unit were in many cases left in a void, or were only to some extent taken up by religious organisations.

It seems, however, that in the last two decades people in Rubaya have taken to filling the gap in the same way as areas with more and earlier developed civil societies (eg. Buganda) had already been doing for a long time, that is by organising themselves into local functional groups. This has happened to the extent that Rubaya now was found to have a surprisingly strong civil society base, comprising cohesive participatory community planning structures (as discussed in the previous section) coupled with a pattern of sometimes even multiple memberships in local common interest groups.

Grassroot institutions such as farmers groups are key to the success of the community based planning process itself, and particularly the implementation of the plans that arise from the process. They are important in being entry points for service provider institutions whether public or private. It's within these local institutions that issues to do with leadership in the communities and who are the influential persons, are determined and can be further understood.

It was thus experienced in this study that there are many local groups already existing, started through local initiative or through outsider influence. Some of the institutions have exemplary forms of work, leadership structures and roles, administrative terms, rules and regulations, reward systems, resource mobilization, implementing of ideas, monitoring and evaluation, linkage practices as well as planning, that can be cases for others to use.

#### **4.1 The different types of groups present in the sub county**

Many local groups exist in Rubaya that were not the result of recent community planning exercises, involving CARE FIP or other NGO planning activities, NAADS, and the local government annual community based planning.<sup>10</sup> These include self help groups and groups involved in burial and helping the sick, which also conduct savings and credit provision for their members. Some of such groups were started by the locals themselves (Tihira Warambo society of Karambo village; Rwabarera bataka kweterana, Kitooma; Nyarikira bataka kweziika). Other groups, on the other hand were initiated by service provider organisations (NGOs) such as AHI (Karambo Farmers United Research Group, ) AFRICARE (Karambo Tukole), NEMA, KADFA, AMREF, UNSPPA, former cooperative society groups and others. Still other groups were started by specific government programmes, such as the Plan for Modernization of Agriculture (PMA) district programmes (an example being the Rwaganiro FAL class, which is also involved in agricultural production).

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<sup>10</sup> An initial NAADS inventory found 2-300 existing groups in the sub county, according to interview with Benson Mugisha of AHI, Kabale, 8-11-2003.

There are also groups, that were started as a result of the planning processes. These include a large number of common interest groups registered with NAADS, as well as experimental groups supported by CARE FIP. In some cases entire villages formed themselves into experimental and learning groups. There are about 400 NAADS registered farmer groups, but only about 200 are active<sup>11</sup>. A very large part of the preplanning groups as well as those initiated by FIP and other NGOs are among the NAADS registered groups, which in addition include groups that were established for that particular purpose. Some of the groups, especially among the older ones, cut across villages, and some even have district wide membership and affiliation such as KADFA.

**Box 4.1 Functional Groups in Karambo village** (as narrated in Dec. 2002, before FIP was introduced, by a group of 14 randomly selected villagers)

1. *Tihiira Warambo socity*. Cooperative society of landholders in the neighbouring drained swamp. It has 36 members from Karambo, but a total of 81 members from several villages. Grows and markets Irish potatoes and cabbages. Started in 1959 by farmers who drained the swamp on advice from the government, to grow sweet potatoes in a cooler place (the swamp) to avoid infestation with caterpillars. They have received training from AHI: spacing and ridges for Irish potatoes; Africare: market oriented modern farming for beans, maize, Irish potatoes and pyrethrum; Earlier they learned a lot from Agricultural Dept: eg. planting Irish potatoes on ridges, terracing, growing grass (no burning), and trash lines. Now they are registered with NAADS and requested fish farming, but were so far disappointed.
2. *Karambo Mutual Liking Group*. Created 2002 for NAADS registration with 27 members. Dug fish pond after receiving training by sub county service provider and promise of fishlings. They were ready to buy them when his contract expired! They are now considering to use locally available mudfish from the swamp.
3. *Karambo Let Us Be United*. An Irish potato group with 20 members. Created for NAADS registration, and with little activity yet.
4. *Karambo Tukore (Let us work)*, a 45 member group growing Irish potatoes, climbing beans, maize, and pyrethrum. Started 2001. Strengthened by NAADS membership application. Supported by Africare/CIAT. Africare helped them build a bridge. Donors provided training and seeds to demoplots on group fields, where members were taught. Joint group work every Thursday. They multiply modern seeds, keep some for the group fields and divide rest between members. Other villages visit and learn. Africare is still supporting the group.
5. *Karambo Farmers United Research Group*. 37 members. Experimental group: Irish potatoes, maize, beans. Started in 1995, when AHI enquired existing self help group about very poor agricultural methods. So they started experiment with local methods on one plot and one "AHI plot" with manure and fertilizers. Organic manure was found to be better than fertilizers, which on their relatively good soils deplete fertility, and are too expensive. Experimented also with local beans vs. climbing beans. Have gotten in the habit of comparing, so this year they compare different ways of cultivating for sorghum. Have also noted that Victoria hybrids do better than local Irish potatoes, but only for 2-3 seasons. NAADS registered.
6. *Karambo Rwanganyiro Natives United* is a burial and stretcher group for two neighbouring

<sup>11</sup> Interview with the sub county NAADS coordinator 19-11-2002.

villages. Also functions as savings group. Buy trees for pit sawing for timber for coffins. It sells timber eg for windows, to buy nails etc for coffins. 65 members incl. Widows, children.

7. *Karambo Natives(Abataka) Selfreliance*, as number 6 but only in Karambo. 25 members. (All villagers are said to be member of one of them).
8. *Karambo womens let's be together*. Has 25 female members. Is not NAADS registered. Grow Irish potatoes, and cater for groupmembers funerals, cooking etc.
9. *Naiwunyo* [?] (the name of a certain hill) *Let's be selfreliant group*. Just started with 15 members to grow pyrethrum. Not registered.
10. Two small working groups working together for money from casual labour.
11. Six church work groups providing casual labour to earn money for church work.

## 4.2 Major functions and activities of local groups

The principal goals of the community initiated burial and stretcher groups are to assist each other in times of crisis such as loss of some one or having one taken up with illness by providing money, transport, cooking and making of coffins. The other activities that these groups participate in seem initially to have been support services for the major goal or intention, but also gradually to have attained important roles in themselves. Some are still mainly aimed at keeping the members together and asset building for the group, particularly acquiring tools like hoes, pick axes, stretchers, and food utensils. The extra works for burial groups can include savings and credit, pitsawing, selling timber for windows and doors, or making bricks for sale. Some other groups engage in renting of land, stocking food for the worst seasons or periods when there is a food shortage, provision of labour for hire as casual labourers.(a women's group – Rwabarare Women Limited in Kitooma Parish and their husbands are involved in this). Other activities can be tree seedling multiplication for own use, but also for sale, usually supported by AFRENA (See Box 4.2)

Other locally initiated groups have been started as joint income earning groups, often starting with group engagement as casual labourers, thus earning the initial capital for group agriculture on a member's or a rented field. Such groups are often women's groups sharing the income, or devoted to earn money for one of the local churches.

External NGOs looking for local groups to implement their agricultural programmes have sometimes done it through such existing groups, but more often, they have facilitated the creation of new, but very similar groups, which they have supported with training and free inputs. After withdrawal of NGO support some of the NGO initiated groups have continued precisely like the earlier locally initiated groups – while others have languished without activities, waiting for possible renewed support. Many are still waiting in frustration, now for NAADS support after having registered as NAADS groups.

A former co-operative society (Tihira Karambo soccity) of long standing in Karambo village was involved in growing and marketing of Irish potatoes and cabbages, beans, pyrethrum, and maize. The group got training support from AHI, and Africare and has now also registered with NAADS. Although it has not yet received anything from NAADS it clearly seems strong enough in its own capacity to survive successful as well as unsuccessful bets for external support.

The groups that have arisen out of the NAADS planning process itself have as their proclaimed goals the alleviation of poverty – as it was passed on to them by their facilitators. That goal, however, seems to have a certain religious connotation other than an independent intention of the groups; religious in the sense that most of the efforts to get the groups out of poverty seems to be focused on receiving government assistance rather than on own group initiatives, such as those of the burial and stretcher groups. It should be noted that a number of local groups have been registered as NAADS interest groups. The extent however that they are able to have goals that can be regarded as own goals and that can direct the groups to work with and beyond NAADS is yet to be established. Those few NAADS groups that have succeeded in getting going, had the following activities: One group (Karambo Mutual liking group) had a fish pond , others are involved in Irish potato growing, pyrethrum, and beans. Some of the activities seemed to be long time engagements of the groups prior to belonging to NAADS. NAADS only provides demonstrations and training through service providers contracted by NAADS, but very often coincide with other inputs provided from PMA nonsectoral grants or LGDP funds, thus creating a lot of confusion in villages.

**Box 4.2 A functional (stretcher) group in Bishaki village.** Group interview with 8 villagers, 18-12-2002.

Bishaki and a neighbouring village called Nyakihanda have a group called *Bishaki and Nyakihanda Bataka Kweterena*. The group, which started in 1971, is a community group of which every person in the village, young and old, rich or poor, male or female is a member. Its main activities include helping the sick to carry them to hospital, offering savings and credit services, and assisting those who have lost loved ones. (Stretcher and burial group)

It has a constitution with rules and regulations to guide its activities. The executive of the group, which is elected regularly, meets every 30<sup>th</sup> day of the month. A general meeting is usually held once every 3 months. In these meetings, plans are made on the group's development activities such as determining the fees to be contributed by members, how to increase savings, when repayments of loans should be made, when to buy a new stock of tools etc. There is equal and free participation and contribution by all members in the group meetings, where decisions are usually made by show of hands. Villagers mention as benefits of the group, the freedom of speech by all members, getting respect from others, and building skills at speaking and how to behave in public.

The group collects money from membership fees and interest on loans to members and it collects food contributions. The food is used at funerals, may be distributed in case of foodshortages, in which case the recipients are expected to pay back with interest in kind, or can be sold to members. The money collected are used to provide members with loans or for investments. The group invests in tools, such as hoes, mattocks, spades, and stretchers. It has bought a plot of eucalyptus trees – for timber to make coffins and for sale. Short term interest free loans are given to members in crises because of sickness or death. Others may get loans at an interest for such things as school fees for children, buying and renting of land or paying

graduated tax.

Most chief loan clients are the men backed by their wives. The women do not usually borrow money. The group agreed that they do not give money to married women since in case of failure to pay or leaving or being divorced, it would be difficult to recover the money. However, widows do get loans seconded or backed by their eldest sons – with whom they sign for the loans. The executive, however has to be sure that both the husband and the wife have agreed to take a loan, and both are required to sign for the money to avoid cases where land is confiscated when the wife is unaware – causing suffering to her and the children.

A central part of group life is handling loan defaulters. In a general meeting a defaulter is allowed to explain his situation as to why he has been unable to pay. He is also supposed to give a clear plan of how he intends to pay. If he does not have a convincing plan, he is requested to make a written permission for the group to use his land or even sell the land. A crop can be grown by the group on the land and sold at harvest. If the person has not yet paid then the land is used a second season.

The visionary approach of the FIP encouraged communities to look at their development goals for the next 5 years. The implementation groups however seem to be focused on activities other than long term goals of the community. The tendency therefore to having ideal or religious intentions passed down by CARE FIP is also apparent, submerging the element of goal ownership. This implies some sort of short sightedness as far as the long term goals and the relation of the present activities to those goals is concerned. The implementation activities can likely overshadow the long term goals of such groups, especially if there is not proper group institutional capacity building tied with the present activities. There seems to be little or no group institutional capacity building done by CARE FIP. The whole process of goal formation needs further understanding especially in as far as it leads to ownership, and initiatives local to the groups.

CARE FIP groups had the following major activities: planning, experimentation on Irish potatoes, land management, setting up of tree nursery beds, soil conservation, recording and monitoring progress, visiting other successful farming areas, seeking linkages say with AFRENA, and other institutions. (To be further analysed in section 6 below).

#### **4.3 Group structures, membership, and gender issues**

Most of the groups irrespective of the institutional affiliation and whether local or introduced had a common leadership structure that included a chairperson, a vice chairpersons, secretary and treasurer. For the FIP groups there were also offices specific to interventions like soil management, modern farming experiments: recorder, and advisor, and sometimes secretaries for women and defence (to guard crops against theft). Many groups have fairly sophisticated and democratic rules and regulations to help them run their activities.

Group meetings have planning sessions. These are however integrated with other group business activities, so it may not be clear what comes first the planning or addressing a specific need for a particular meeting. A typical local group-planning meeting will have the following:

- Chairman calls the meeting to order and calls for a word of prayer.
- The secretary reads previous meetings minutes and the day's agenda.
- Issues agreed on previously are reviewed for progress and further action.
- During these meetings savings made from disbursed loans are considered and a decision on how to use them is made
- Loan defaulters are interrogated or requested to explain their situation.
- Aspects of the agenda are discussed.
- Conflict resolution.
- Specific roles are assigned e.g. the executive can be left with the task of collecting overdue payments following the guidelines agreed upon in the general meetings. The executive is also requested to disburse monies to new loan takers.

The groups have memberships ranging from 15 – 80 members. There were a number of women groups but the majority whether local or instituted were mixed. A few of the groups had started over forty years ago but had evolved over time to new roles and labels depending on the need and the partner institution engaging them. For most of such groups previous activities were maintained in the group. Several of the women groups, for example, had coopted their husbands when they registered for NAADS, as NAADS in the name of gender sensitivity does not allowed member groups that are not sexually mixed!

While with the local community groups some of the structures and the roles of the leaders are spelt out by the group itself, for the institutionally linked groups, the structures of leadership as well as roles preferred might thus be indicated by the promoting institutions.

According to Table 4.1, more than 50% of all households in the sub county claim to have have membership in at least one group. This does not quite give credit to the claim in many villages that all villages are members of a burial group. While respondents may not have been thinking about these groups, when asked about active membership in savings or agricultural groups, a 50% claimed membership is actually quite high, and being also only slightly biased towards the better off population it can be taken as a sign of a strong emerging civil society.

**Table 4.1. Group membership in households in Rubaya sub county**

	% of households			
	Better off	Less poor	Poorest	Total
Household where anyone is a member				
Savings group	66%	47%	36%	45%
Agricultural group	52%	38%	33%	38%
Any group	71%	52%	42%	51%

#### 4.4 Local groups strengthening civil society

The present local community groups, those introduced and the respective outsider institutions are a potential for the success of the plans developed. There are strengths and weaknesses of the local groups as well as the groups introduced by outsider institutions. There is need to integrate the analysis of the strenghts of all the groups to come up with a local insitutional development strategy whose goal is to strengthen the capacity of the local civil society to be the basis for social and economic development and poverty eradication.

In summary this study found these strengths of the local groups and their roles in strengthening civil society:

- The new groups co-exist along with the old ones with mutual enriching of their respective roles.
- Multiple group belongingness seems to be a livelihood strategy of most people in the sub county.
- Local groups are a major social security in issues of a sick person, loss of an individual, tax payments and credit provision even for production.
- Groups have developed strong democratic and structured leadership, functions, tenure & activities.
- Groups have developed clear procedures for financial and credit administration and recovery, incl collateral in land, with gender sensitive aspects.
- Clear financial sourcing strategies in place e.g. interest, crop sales, membership fees, fines, casual labour groups
- Community economy strengthened through: joint markets, common assets, labour, social security, financial institutions,
- Joint agricultural development work.

There are, however, both strengths and also weaknesses of the groups in terms of structures, functioning and dynamics particularly. There is still need for well facilitated group strengthening, given the potential of such groups. However, care needs to be taken not to erode the already existing social values of such groups. Special skills for this would be needed by the

facilitators. One entry point is to identify activities and values that relate to outsider values that are likely to enhance group strengthening.

Strengths and weaknesses also exist with the linkage aspects of the groups. While the FIP planning approach does encourage the work groups to develop clear strategies for linking with possible service providers, constraints exist in terms of lack of capacity to dialogue with distant outsiders, lack of resources such as transport, lack of information on which providers to contact for what purposes. The constraints are not only with the FIP groups but also with other groups. Even though important linkages have been made in some cases, there remains a big gap. Possible institutions that could be linked with also usually lack the room to accommodate demands by groups that were not in their original planning nor in their jurisdictions. This calls for the need to dialogue and coalitions to be developed that allow institutions to receive demands from organised groups, since this has the advantage of community development and increased capacity to take lead in their development programs. The flexibility on behalf of the organisations would be in terms of budgets and human resource.

The other players envisaged were mid level and higher level *meso* type of institutions. These would play roles of advising the grassroots institutions on aspects of institutional functioning; accessing services and also some would provide the services demanded by the grassroots. It was envisaged that after the grass roots institutions or villages had finished the planning, meso type institutions (service providers) would be contacted by the former, to address issues in the plans.

The study in particular looked for occurrences of good practice in terms of existing farmers and other institutions with some form of organisation, guiding rules and regulations, with assets, doing planning, implementing, and making linkages for receiving services such as advise on land management, crop production and marketing. The study also looked at any new institutions that arose as a result of the planning process, and how they were functioning and taking advantage of opportunities brought to light through the planning process. A look at the service institutions was also done to look at the form of services they made. These can be technology dissemination, production advise, research, community development, capacity building of farmers and their institutions, linkage development and marketing as a prerequisite or outcome of community planning. The result clearly disclosed the gap between those demanding and those providing services.

There are many service provider institutions catering for the sub county, including national and international NGOs, national and international research institutions, administrative and district units in the area. These can in principle be contacted by the community institutions and groups soliciting for support in various forms. Some of the institutions are based in Rubaya sub-county, however most are located in Kabale town or in another place in or outside the district. According to the community informants, they were informed of the benefits of linking up with these service providers by the institutions facilitating the planning activities. However, there were resource constraints in accessing such service providers. Other than knowing the



institutions they could go to, the communities or groups would find it hard to go beyond that. Section 6 below adds a more detailed study of extension interventions and the forms of service provision and providers entailed.

## **5. Agricultural interventions and technology development**

The case of land degradation narrated as declining soil productivity due to erosion and continuous cultivation (leading to nutrient depletion) provides a cross cutting and continuous technology demand niche for the district. Many studies have alluded to the problem and its coping strategies (Kakuru and Peden 1991, Tukahirwa 1995, Were 1992, Miiro 1997, AFRENA 1998, Lindblade et al 1996.) Mostly the problems are blamed on cultivation on the very steep slopes covering most of the land surface, accompanied with scant measures to prevent soil erosion and depletion of soil fertility due to reduced fallowing frequency, and to deforestation. Recent research by Carswell and Farley has shown that these have been the predominant views of the causes of Kabale's poverty for at least half a century – with very little scientific documentation. (Carswell 2002b, Farley 1996). The underlying suggestion is that both the problem analyses and the solution identifications are still scattered, despite numerous attempts to solve the problem. There is clearly no single technological recommendation(s) that would solve the problem<sup>12</sup>. To a certain extent this is because of the project approach which has been used to develop the solutions, which solutions then cease with the ending of the projects.

Despite the limited scientific documentation of Kabale's overall development problems, but resulting from such entrenched environmental narratives (as Carswell calls them), development interventions, have almost exclusively focused on agricultural technology, including soil conservation and agro forestry projects.

Kabale district – and earlier Kigezi district of which the present Kabale was part – have thus been exposed to numerous external agricultural interventions. Beginning in the 1930es and culminating in the '40es Kigezi became widely known as the East African success story of the British concerns with the environmental impact of peasant agriculture in their colonies. The result can be seen to this day, where all land on the slopes in Kabale is cultivated on an impressive system of terraces, and local by-laws promoting them are still in force (Carswell 2000, Farley 1996).

The colonial agricultural service also, with varying success, tried to introduce export crops such as coffee and tobacco (Carswell 2002a). Support to the drainage of widespread papyrus swamps in the 1950es added greatly to the cultivated land area, at first creating the basis for provision by local smallholders of vegetables, including Irish potatoes, to urban markets in Uganda and

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<sup>12</sup> Personal communication with Sandy Mutabaazi, District Production and Marketing Office, Kabale.

Rwanda, and subsequently for large scale, but again local, dairy farming, which is presently exporting milk to neighbouring Rwanda.<sup>13</sup>

A final major change in the colonial period was that early deforestation made room for planted woodlots, principally of Black Wattle and Eucalyptus. In Katuna watershed it resulted in a change from 2.6% in the 1950s to 5.4% in the 1990s of the total land use cover consisting of planted woodlots, while bush and woodland simultaneously declined from 1.7 to 0.3% in continuation of a process that had already reduced natural woodland to only 1.7% 50 years ago (Breyer et al. 1997).

The same government efforts continued during the first decade after independence, until Amin's reign and the civil war periods that followed led to relaxation of agricultural interventions.

From around 1990 agricultural interventions in Kabale District have been dominated by a plethora of NGO initiatives (in Kabale, so called Agricultural NGOs include international agricultural research organizations) of which the major ones, which have also been present in Rubaya are:

- Agro-forestry Research Network for Africa (AFRENA), a subsidiary of the International Centre for Research in Agro Forestry (ICRAF), has been active in Kabale district since 1989, offering research and implementation of soil conservation and fertility measures, such as integrated watershed management, fallowing, hedgerows, boundary planting, agro forestry trees, fruit trees etc. The first 5 years they concentrated on on-station research, species trials and technologies fitting into local farming systems, including work with terraces and crops. The next five years, the tried technologies were taken to the farmers using on-farm experimentation. Contour hedges and fallow improvement were tested in researcher designed, but farmer managed research, coupled with distribution of free seeds.

Since 2000 AFRENA have embarked on phase 3 of their work in Kabale, implemented mainly by the AFRENA dissemination team, quantifying and packaging earlier results under farmer design and management, into packages. The packages include seeds, which anybody can buy. In Rubaya AFRENA has especially provided training and inputs, primarily tree seeds, through other service providers, such as government extension, AFRICARE, AHI, EDF, and CARE FIP. This has included boundary planting, soil fertility, soil conservation (fallow, hedgerows etc), and fruit trees.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> According to (Breyer et al. 1997), comparing 1950 to 1990 air photos of Katuna watershed adjacent to Rubaya, some 12% of the total landcover changed status from permanently flooded herbaceous wetland to small and large scale farmland in drained wetland areas.

<sup>14</sup> Personal communication with David Siriri of AFRENA, Kabale.

- African Highlands Initiative (AHI), which is a cooperation between a number of international research organisations with International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) in the lead, started work in Kabale in 1995, when an action plan for the district was developed and a research/development team for 2 sub-counties, including Rubaya, was established with contributions from NARO, Makerere, Africare and CARE, as well as the districts agricultural extension department. Other contributors were CIAT (beans, seed systems, participatory research); AFRENA/ICRAF (trees and tree seeds); CIP (potato IPM); TSBF (soil fertility); IITA (banana IPM). The team worked with farmer groups (18 in Rubaya) according to their needs, and training farmers to train farmers, on one large demonstration plot in each parish with different demonstrations, which different groups worked on.<sup>15</sup>
- AFRICARE, an International NGO supported mainly by USAID, started working with soldier resettlement in Kabale in 1994 and since 1997 with Uganda Food Security Initiative, which is now operational in 132 communities in Kabale district, including Rubaya sub-county. In Rubaya it started with village action plans, identifying the players, community expectations, and AFRICARE expectations. Within one parish the plans are often the same, including erosion control through: agro forestry, tree seeds, community tree nurseries, digging trenches, and energy saving stoves; then in addition road construction; health; and agriculture. In agriculture they have till now been working with: irish potatoes and climbing beans, supporting communal gardens and stores for multiplication of seeds, for which they have a Memorandum of Understanding with NARO for delivery of clean planting material. They have more recently introduced farmer field schools to train seed growers rather than through group gardens. Based on this, commercial seed growers are now able to produce seed potatoes under NARO supervision.<sup>16</sup>
- One of the latest agricultural innovations to have spread rapidly in Kabale District was climbing beans, to supplement the traditional bush beans, after having been grown for some time both in neighbouring Kisoro district and in Rwanda. According to our interviews in Rubaya, it was introduced there in the 1990es by Kabale District Farmers Association (KADFA) Extension Link Farmers, subsequent to which farmers have been buying seeds from them, from the KADFA store in Kabale town, and even from Rwanda. In Rwanda it is said to be possible to buy seeds for a different variety that is better suited to Rubaya conditions.
- Most of the above organizations have been working closely with the National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO) through its Kachwekano substation, and particularly now with it as Agricultural Research and Development Centre (ARDC).

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<sup>15</sup> Personal communication with Benson Mugisha, AHI Kabala.

<sup>16</sup> Personal communication with Denis Ashaba & Charles Musoke, AFRICARE, Kabale

Kachwekano has been in the district long, but as ARDC only for two years. It is a scientific station with the main function to refine development of suitable technologies for the region through adaptive research. In addition multiplies seed approved as appropriate foundation seed for other seed multipliers in the area. Technologies promoted through the 1990s have been Irish potatoes, beans, wheat, bananas, sorghum, soil management, green manures, hedgerows, and agroforestry with AFRENA. As ARDC it started with needs assessment and identifying the potentials for the area, and is then doing mostly on farm participatory research, with farmers and extension agents. It also undertakes training of trainers, including farmer groups. A committee composed of researchers, extension, and farmers took the initiative to the establishment of joint trials (proper research) and demonstrations by NARO and NGOs.<sup>17</sup>

NARO has thus been in the area for quite some time, but according to the leading ARDC staff's own evaluation the results are hardly visible! This is the same type of conclusion CARE FIPs baseline survey arrives at: that survey respondents know of many of the new technologies being disseminated in the area, but do not use them (Whiteside 2002). This is a likely explanation of the generally held contention, that Rubaya farmers are not interested in agriculture. That does seem in contradiction, though, with the 20<sup>th</sup> century's revolutionary changes in *kiga* agriculture introduced above, viz. planted woodlots replacing indigenous forest and cultivation of reclaimed swamps, as well as numerous smaller cultural innovations, such as last decades' adoption of climbing beans. However, it may have an element of truth if only referring to male farmers, since the oft emphasised sexual bias of agricultural work in Africa really has a remarkably visible appearance in Kabale district, and female *kiga* farmers are usually praised by Ugandans for their agricultural work.

### 5.1 The soil management challenge

The basic concern with falling production and soil degradation was shared by the Rubaya sample farmers in this study, more so by the *poorest* and *less poor*, *less* by the *better off*. (Table 5.1) Among those who do agree that production has gone down there is no discernible wealth bias among the reasons given, bad weather and land degradation both mentioned by the larger proportion, ie. 84% of those respondents who agreed production has gone down. Pest and diseases were added by nearly 60%, while only small groups mentioned other reasons frequently mentioned in the literature.

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<sup>17</sup> Personal communication with Imelda ?? & William Wagoire, Kachwekana ARDC.

**Table 5.1 Declining production over the last 5 years and its causes as seen by survey households in Rubaya sub-county**

Production change and its causes	% of households, who consider overall production to have gone down – and % of them, who indicate different causes			
	Better-off	Less poor	Poorest	Total
<b>Overall production has gone down**</b>	64	83	88	82
<b>Causes for production decline</b>	Differences are not significant			
Production down due to weather				84
Production down due to land degradation				84
Production down due to pests & diseases				58
Production down due to dividing land				20
Production down due to lack of inputs				8
Production down due to poor/no seed				8

\*\*=sign at 0.001 level

While weather trends seem highly debatable, and at least something neither farmers, NGOs nor government can do anything about, there seem to be consensus about land degradation – despite the probability that it can hardly have been a continuous development for as long as it has been said, that there is little research evidence, and there is no statistical indication of yields being lower than elsewhere ( ).

At least farmer responses are not in agreement with the commonly held assumption that they do nothing about it. According to table 5.2, 37% of the households claim to practice some kind of soil conservation, but it is highly skewed between the wealth classes. Looking at the different practices, however, there is no significant wealth difference, stabilization of terraces being the predominant one all around.

**Table 5.2 Soil conservation by households in Rubaya sub-county**

Soil conservation practices	% of households practicing soilconservation - and % of them who indicate different practices			
	Better-off	Less poor	Poorest	Total
<b>Practiced soil conservation*</b>	52	40	29	37
<b>Which soil conservation practice</b>	Differences are not significant			
Stabilized terraces- katikankingo				59
Planted in-field grass strips				30
Made dead barriers of trash lines, stones				26
Fanya juu, Fanya chini or similar				22
Planted trees				17

\*=sign at 0.05 level

The survey – and the farmers – had a problem with the terraces, however: in the survey it was expected that answers about doing anything to prevent soil erosion (soil washing down during rain) would include cultivation on slopes being done on terraces to prevent soil erosion. However that is simply how cultivation on slopes is done in Kabale, as amply documented by our transect

walks. And as shown by (Miiri 1997) and (Bashaasha 2001) terraces in Kabale are not really constructed, they develop by themselves from trash-lines and the downwards cultivation from one trash-line-soon-to-be-terrace-bund to the next, which moves the soil downwards between two bunds, gradually forming a bench along the lower one.

Thus the operational understanding of a terrace seems to refer to two important parts: the bench of the terrace and the bund. These are patterned in a step wise structure showing bunds of the upper plot proceeding into benches of the lower plot. It's the bench on which the cultivation is done, while the bund does the stabilization of the plot. Siriri has shown that production differs a lot even on a single bench with higher yield on the lower section than the upper one of the bench, mainly due to down slope erosion and cultivation practices that pull the soil down wards (Siriri 1998, AFRENA 1998).

Traditionally terraces are sometimes broken down, since there is a risk, when the bund becomes too high (e.g. over two metres), that they will slide during the rain, destroying both the crops above and below. If the terrace bund, as is becoming more and more common, is also the boundary between different owners, they still have a common interest in avoiding landslide, but, at the same time, a contradictory interest since breaking the terrace will dump all the fertile soil from the upper field accumulated at the terrace bund on the lower field owned by somebody else.

Table 5.2, then, does not highlight cultivation on terraces, which is done by everybody (Miiri 1977, and our own transect walks), as a soil conservation practice in itself, only the extra step of actively trying to stabilize terraces, i.e. preventing landslides by planting grass, trees, or shrub along the bunds, or actively breaking and allowing terraces to re-develop.

The confusion spills over into both the literature and the soil conservation by-laws, where the latter, as well as a major part of the literature, do not mention *terraces* at all, but only talk about *bunds*, although the terrace pattern is the most clearly visible feature of the Kabale landscape (e.g. Lindblade et al.1996, for the by-laws see Farley 1996). Others do treat them as terraces (Raussen et al. 1999, Carswell 2000, AHI 1997 talks of "terraces of sorts", while Farley 1996 have terraces in the historical, but not the present day sections).

Consequently when almost 2/3 of the Rubaya respondents admit not to practice soil conservation, that does not mean they are not cultivating on terraces. And when half of these explain their non practice with lack of knowledge of what to do, they are likely referring to what else to do. Similarly 22% do not see erosion as a problem – on the terraces, while the other 20 and 13% referring to materials and money are most likely thinking about planting materials for active stabilization of the terraces, or about intra strip measures. Interestingly, while practicing soil conservation at all (on the terraces) is clearly wealth related, there is no correlation between wealth and the different reasons for doing nothing. (Table 5.3.)

Considering the literature's lamentations about the very high risks of soil erosion with cultivation of the extremely steep slopes of Kabale, it is noteworthy that less than half of the Rubaya households have observed a lot of soil being washed away from their fields when it rains.

**Table 5.3 Households reasons for not practicing soil conservation**

No soil conservation and why not	% of households who do not practice soil conservation - and % of them who indicate different reasons why not			
	Better-off	Less poor	Poorest	Total
<b>Do not practice soil conservation*</b>	48	60	71	63
<b>Reasons for not practicing soil conservation</b>	Differences are not significant			
Do not know what to do				51
Erosion does not seem to be a problem				22
Lack of materials				20
Lack of money				13
Lack of time				8

\*=sign at 0.05 level

Table 5.4 further shows that among those who do not practice soil conservation actively, it is almost 60% who have observed little erosion on their fields.

**Table 5.4 Soil conservation and observed soil erosion by households in Rubaya sub-county**

Households observing soil washing away on their fields when it rains	% Households practicing and not practicing soil conservation		
	Total (346)	Yes (128)	No (218)
It happens a lot	46	54	41
It does not happen very much, or not at all	53	46	58
Total	100	100	100

Sign. At 0.05 level

This relatively limited concern with erosion among farmers, despite the dominant narrative to the contrary, seems in line with Farley's comment on the lack of documentation of widespread, severe soil erosion, while the few research results available show a low degree of erodibility of soils and erosibility of rains (Farley 1996). Other studies on the management of terraces also indicate that mainly the bunds reduce erosion and improve the productivity of the bench (Miiron 1997, AFRENA 1998, Siriri, 1998; Miiron and Okiror, 2003).

When farmers mentioned land degradation as the main reason for declining production it is very likely that they were thinking about soil fertility decline rather than soil erosion. In any case practicing soil fertility improvement on household fields is much more common in Rubaya than soil conservation activities, which is similar to what was found in a study in another sub county

(Miiror and Okiror, 2003, table 23) . As indicated by Table 5.5, it is done by almost 2/3 of the households in Rubaya, again more commonly by the *better-off*, less by the *less poor*, and least by the *poorest*, of whom still more than half do it. Among those who do try to improve soil fertility, the most widespread practice, which is also used equally by all three poverty groups, is use of household refuse.

Incorporation of compost and crop residues (which are not strictly differentiated by Rubaya farmers), use of manure and fallowing, require more resources and are more frequently used by the *better-off*.

**Table 5.5 Soil fertility improvement by households in Rubaya sub-county**

Soil fertility improvement practices	% of households practicing soil fertility improvement - and % of them who indicate different practices used			
	Better-off	Less poor	Poorest	Total
<b>Practiced soil fertility improvement *</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Which soil fertility improvement practice</b>				
Used household refuse/waste/ash(ns)				<b>72</b>
Used chicken, goat or pig manure*	78	57	47	<b>57</b>
Used compost and/or residues *	54	49	34	<b>44</b>
Used cattle manure**	28	14	5	<b>13</b>
Used fallow*	15	7	3	<b>7</b>

ns=not significant

\*=sign at 0.05 level

\*\*=sign at 0.001 level

The most common reasons given for not doing any soil fertility improvement are lack of money to buy inputs, and lack of knowledge of what to do, which may both be expressions of the respondents assumption that so-called modern ways to improve soil fertility should be used, but they do not know them or cannot afford them (inorganic fertilizers) (Table 5.6.) The same is implied by (Miiror & Okiror 2003, table 25) showing that major problems faced in land management are lack of planting materials, manure, and inputs, as well as of skills and knowledge. They did find lack of labour to be the most frequently experienced problem, which in case of Rubaya did not, however, appear as the major reason for not practicing soil preservation.

## 5.2 A discussion of fallowing

Soil fertility depletion is frequently mentioned – side by side with soil erosion - in government and project reports as the main reason for decreasing production and spreading food insecurity in Kabale. The main cause pointed out is abandonment of the traditional fallow system due to pressure on land. In the Rubaya survey (table 5.5) only some 5% of all households claimed to improve fertility through fallowing, indicating that these concerns may be justified. However



when they had earlier been asked if they had left any land uncultivated during the last two seasons, 31 % of the

**Table 5.6 Households in Rubaya sub-county that do nothing to improve soil fertility**

No soil fertility improvement, and its reasons	% of households who do not practice soil fertility improvement - and % of them who indicate different reasons for doing nothing			
	Better-off	Less poor	Poorest	Total
<b>Did nothing to improve soil fertility*</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Reasons given for not doing anything</b>				
No money to buy inputs (ns)				<b>39</b>
Did not know what to do (ns)				<b>34</b>
Soil fertility is not a problem**	53	12	12	<b>17</b>
Did nothing because of lack of time (ns)				<b>18</b>

ns=not significant

\*=sign at 0.05 level

\*\*=sign at 0.001 level

farmers answered affirmatively. According to table 5.7 about half of the 31% fallowed land in order to let it regain fertility, or about 15% of all households, compared with the 5% found above. There is no obvious explanation for this discrepancy, but the question whether or not a household has uncultivated land is perhaps more likely to give all the correct answers, than when fallow is recorded as the 10<sup>th</sup> option for soil fertility improvement, in which case we may expect that the correct percentage of fallowing households in a year is closer to 15 than to 5%.

**Table 5.7 Fallowing by households in Rubaya sub-county**

Fallowing and its causes	% of households who have land under fallow - and % of them who indicate different causes			
	Better-off	Less poor	Poorest	Total
<b>Households who let pieces of land lie fallow**</b>	57	38	15	31
<b>Reasons for fallowing</b>				
Fallow to regenerate soil fertility	Differences are not significant			51
No time or strength to cultivate				33
Change to trees or cattle				21
Fallow because of lack of money/inputs				16

\*\*=sign at 0.001 level

With the distribution of household land on a number of strips (along terraces) it is not easy for a farmer to estimate the area of their landholding. The number of strips may be a more precise proxy for the relative landholding of different households. Table 5.8 thus presents the mean landholding in terms of number of strips of households in the three wellbeing categories in Rubaya and the % of their land which is fallowed.

This estimate of 11% of land being under fallow is probably on the low side, as people are more likely to forget about uncultivated land than that which is cultivated. There is also a question of what land is actually classified as fallow.

**Table 5.8 Strips of land fallowed by households in Rubaya sub-county**

Poverty level	Strips of land owned	Strips fallowed	% fallowed
<b>Better-off</b>	9.08	1.60	18
<b>Less poor</b>	6.27	0.68	11
<b>Poorest</b>	3.93	0.22	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.67</b>	<b>0.62</b>	<b>11</b>

In another survey, of 2500 plots in three counties, 8% of the plots were classified as being in seasonal fallow, 14% under long fallow, and 10 % abandoned, ie a total of 32% of the plots not cultivated (AFRENA 1998). Based on farm surveys in unspecified parts of Kabale area (Grisley and Mwesigwa 1994) found that 76% (!) of all farmers had land under fallow, and that 26% of cropland or 29% of their fields were fallowed in one season. Furthermore doing regression models showed them *“that a large decrease in fallowing cannot be expected for even a doubling of population density per unit area of land. The findings suggest that, as population densities increase, households engage in more land- (and labour-) intensive production technologies, especially intercropping, while continuing to rely upon fallowing as a soil loss/fertility management tool”*(p88). This result would seem to corroborate the very contested results arrived at by (Lindblade et al. 1996), that over a 50 year period, and despite a doubling of the population, contrary to all common assumptions the proportion of the land cover devoted to cultivation and grazing at any one time had fallen, while that resting or under trees had grown by 50% or more. They also explain this surprising change by an intensification of intercropping on those fields actually cropped.

In much of the agricultural and environmental discourse in Kabale in the last decade such research results are simply overlooked and the same old narratives continue to abate. More serious contestants argue that fallowing or resting land is no longer the same as it was, as farmers are now rather abandoning land that is so degraded as to render cultivation unprofitable, meaning that an additional land use category, that of abandoned land, is required. The (AFRENA 1998) report indicated that 10% of the fields had been abandoned in the district, while (Miiror and Okiror 2003) finds an average of 2 plots abandoned per household in one other sub county of Kabale (about 20%). This too may be what (Bashaasha 2001) refers to as an “extended fallow”, as farmers are not likely to abandon land in the sense that they would accept if somebody else started using it. The AFRENA report tries to differentiate between short term, long term fallows, and abandoned land. None of the studies have a clear definition distinguishing fallow and abandonment, but state that farmers have a clear sense of difference.

Farmers in Rubaya did talk about abandoning land if it had become too degraded for cultivation, but meaning that it would be abandoned to be planted to trees, or to be used for grazing. One

farmer explaining how farmers on a certain slope under grass, but with clearly visible remnants of terraces, had decided four years ago to turn it into common grazing area, noted that the following season he might try to cultivate one or two of *his* strips, to see if it has become worthwhile to extend cultivation, or whether to leave it to rest for some time to come.

Table 5.9 adapts the (Lindblade et al. 1996) and the (Breyer et al. 1997) results to compare landuse cover on slopes in central parts of the district obtained from transects in 1945 and '96, and in Katuna watershed from airphotos from the 1950es and 1990es, with that in Rubaya in 2003 measured in transect walks from hilltop to valley bottom in 5 of this study's survey villages.

**Table 5.9 Physical measurements of land use on slopes in Kabale district**

Landuses	% of arable land (also excluding drained swamp)				
	Kabale district 1945*	Kabale District 1996*	Katuna watershed 1950es**	Katuna watershed 1990es**	Rubaya subcounty 2003***
Cultivated	55	46	87	88	56
Resting	21	34			16
Grass	17	10	8	5	16
Woodlots	5	10	3	6	11
Bush/trees	1	0	2	0	

*Excludes housing areas, institutions, roads, wetlands and rocks, and drained swamp.*

*\*Adapted from (Lindblade et al.1966)*

*\*\*Adapted from (Breyer et al.1997)*

*\*\*\*Own transect walks 2003*

The figures in the table has to be taken with a certain care, as the distinction between the different categories is neither straightforward on airphotos nor on the ground. For example, in an area like this, where cropping periods for different crops vary between 1-3 seasons per year, where crops with different seasons may be intercropped, and where resting periods down to a few months between cropping seasons are regarded as fallowing, it does become rather subjective when such a field is categorised as fallow – and the extend of fallowing become dependent on when in a year the survey is done! The example above similarly shows that the distinction between grazing and extended fallow is in no way clear-cut. These physical measures do, however, provide means of triangulation with interview data, which are even more prone to uncertainty, since the same interpretations mentioned above must go on in the respondents heads – but beyond our knowledge.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the studies – with all the necessary caveats – is that they do not show with any certainty that there are dramatic differences between the farming systems in terms of land use in different parts of Kabale district nor between now and 40-50 years ago. What may be taken for generally valid is that about half of the land use cover on the slopes is cultivated in any season; That tree cover is about 10% and has been growing, almost all of it

being in planted woodlots (some of which may be classified as abandoned agricultural land, and where it does not make sense to talk of tree cutting as deforestation, since that is what trees are planted for!); And that some 30-40% of the land use cover is grazing, fallow, or abandoned land. The grazing area may have declined over time (being compensated in the drained swamps, where also the cultivation area has been supplemented with high fertility land), and fallowing remains an important feature of the farming system. The major change then, which is not documented here, however, but argued by (Grisley and Mwesigwa 1994) and (Lindblade et al. 1996) would be the increase in cropping intensity on the land which is cultivated.

We noted above the ambiguous “default” role of terraces and bunds in discussions of soil conservation, and we have just presented the issues of fallowing and cropping intensification in relation to soil fertility. The problem here, as in many external interventions may precisely be the sharp distinction between soil conservation and soil fertility, while for the farmers both are closely integrated in the peculiar non-permanence of the Kabale terracing system.

While the present by-laws do not talk about permanent terraces, they do not mention breaking down and reestablishment of bunds as an integral part of the system either. In fact through history there seem to have been some confusion in Kabale whether it was permitted or not, and several farmers told that during the colonial period they would be fined or even imprisoned for breaking terraces. Apart from the problem of landslides mentioned above, farmers were well aware of the depletion of nutrients from the upper half of the terrace and their accumulation in the soils of the lower half, and the advantage of distributing them every now and then – if the same owner would benefit. As it was there have been a lot of conflicts between farmers and authorities, and between upper and lower land owners, the former accusing the latter of “steeling their soil”.

A new intervention supported by CARE FIP in cooperation with ICRAF/AFRENA seems however to have prospects for being very successful. As a technology it builds on the traditional system of non-permanent terraces and related distribution of accumulated nutrients, but introduces an element of permanence and additional build up of nutrients by planting and regular “harvesting” of agro forestry bushes and trees along the bunds, which are subsequently reduced in height more often than in the traditional system. The new system has the advantage over the old that the permanence of trees, bushes and grass along the bund reduces rill erosion after breaking the terrace, the agro forestry species contribute to soil fertility, and they can provide sticks to support another popular innovation, the climbing beans.

In order to make the technology work it is necessary, however, to reduce conflicts between upper and lower owners along the terraces to make them cooperate in the maintenance and breakdown of terraces and distribution of the nutrients. The system is therefore introduced in conjunction with community planning as catchment area projects, where, as one farmer expressed it “we all lose nutrients downwards, but are compensated from above”. Village and later higher local authorities are supporting it by introducing by-laws that force everybody in a watershed that has

agreed to participate, to comply with the system<sup>18</sup>. That the intervention has good prospects is indicated by its spread beyond the areas where it was introduced by CARE FIP. It is expected in the longer run to both reduce the height of terraces and the distance between them, as farmers can point out it has done in neighbouring Rwanda, where it has been legally enforced since independence.

## **6. Recent extension interventions: Government's T&V, NAADS privatisation, and CARE's farmer innovation**

Throughout the history of man, agricultural development has been based on farmers own innovations, including crop breeding, agricultural practices and land and water management. It is only within the last century that scientific discoveries have complemented farmer innovation and adaptation, and only the last few decades that fully scientific agriculture has emerged in a few places. Of course science has helped speeding up agricultural development tremendously in industrialised countries, while in some parts of the developing world, particularly in Africa, farmers still depend largely on the slow spread, adaptation, and adoption of their own and their neighbours' innovations, sometimes including added scientific modifications. Improved seeds have reached almost everywhere, but more often as an irregular improvement, than as a seasonal input. Agrochemicals spread even in Africa in the 1980es, but increasing prices have reduced use in the 1990es.

Since colonial powers began to take an interest in agricultural production in the colonies for revenue and food security, the aim has been to make it more scientific, i.e. based on scientifically proven knowledge (and industrial inputs). Farmers' time proven knowledge came to be regarded as primitive and insufficient. Adaptive research and dissemination systems were introduced, and have had a very long time to socialise even farmers themselves into that discourse. It is only in the last two decades fissures have emerged in the hitherto dominant discourse, stemming primarily from within its own constituency. Indigenous knowledge and farmers' innovations begin to be taken seriously as a supplement or even a valid alternative to scientific knowledge (Agrawal 1995, Chambers 1979, Chambers 1989)

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<sup>18</sup> A village by-law is not enough as that does not include people from other villages that own land in the particular catchment area

## 6.1 Extension in Uganda in the 20<sup>th</sup> century

In Uganda, including Kabale district, the history of extension is often periodised into six periods before the present: Extension through chiefs (1920-56); the progressive farmer period (1957-1963); the extension education phase (1964-1971); the non-directional phase (1972-1979); the recovery phase (1980-1991); and the unified service and T&V (1991-2000)(Friis-Hansen 2002, AHI 1997). Basically they are all, however, based on the non recognition of farmers own knowledge and ability to innovate discourse, and thus on the need to disseminate scientifically developed extension *messages*, including farm inputs.

In terms of content, therefore, the one major divide is between the first period and all the following, in the sense that the first period is regulative, enforcing government regulations about what farmers have to do. It was in this period Arabica coffee was introduced in Kabale, getting the local name “Kiboko”, literally meaning rhinoceros in Kiswahili, but derived from the rhino skin whip used by the chiefs in East Africa.

In the following periods education by extension agents replaced enforcement of agricultural regulations by chiefs. In reality it meant that a token explanation of why was added to telling farmers what to do (Najjingo-Mangheni 1999), but still it did not imply room for questioning what to do – as modern education would ideally do! The bye-laws – soil and water conservation, grass burning, grazing, famine granary, tree planting, and swamp reclamation bye-law - remained in place without much change till the present day, but with variable enforcement by local authorities helped by extension agents (AHI 1997b).

The latest version, the so called *modified T&V* introduced under the World Bank’s Agricultural Extension Project (1993-1998) (Najjingo-Mangheni 1999) was established in Kabale from 1995, when it was described very enthusiastically (AHI 1997b) in contrast with the earlier systems, “where extension agents believed that they know what is best and the farmers are expected to accept and implement the provided wisdom, whether or not they (farmers) see the need for it” (p 24). The new system would be unified, with a “single field extension worker (FEW) responsible for transfer of technology to groups of farmers in a manner that encompasses a farming system” (p 24). A major emphasis was on systematic and regular training schedules from top to bottom, with a somewhat contradictory inclusion of an element of participatory planning. It did still represent the transfer of technology model, implying little respect for the local technology. And a major snag was its introduction simultaneously with structural adjustments rolling back of government, including government extension service, which further reduced an already low FEW/farmer rate, as well as their remuneration and facilitation.

In Kabale the new system hardly got of the ground before it was swallowed by a new trend: the proliferation of NGOs<sup>19</sup> and partnerships between them and the government extension service,

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<sup>19</sup> According to (Najjingo-Mangheni 1999) more than 600 NGOs were engaged in agriculture in 1997.

meaning that government personnel, formally or informally were seconded to work for better paying NGO projects, adopting their different extension methods, while at the same time adapting these to well known extension philosophies. As we have seen above (p ) the wide range of NGO projects in Kabale (including projects by national and international research institutions) were characterised by an equally great variation of interventions and methodologies, all impacting only on a few isolated areas in the district and even in Rubaya sub county. Several of them however included elements of new extension methods that were soon, and simultaneously, to be represented on a broader basis by NAADS in first two, then four sub counties in the district, and by CARE FIP in Rubaya sub county.

## **6.2 Participatory and privatised extension in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

The National Agricultural Advisory Services Programme (NAADS) and CAREs Farmer Innovations Project (CARE FIP) were both conceived at the very the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and started implementation in 2001. NAADS was a central component of the nationwide government Programme for the Modernisation of Agriculture ( ), to be piloted in a limited number of districts, but very soon to be “rolled out” all over the country. Kabale was selected as one of the *trailblazing* districts in Uganda, and Rubaya as one of the sub counties, where implementation of the new extension system began in late 2001(MAAIF 2000 and NAADS 2002).

CARE FIP is a relatively small project covering only Rubaya sub county. It was built to employ new farmer experimentation methods developed by CARE in an earlier project in other parts of Kabale, the Development Through Conservation project (DTC) and has been expanded also into a learning process for methods linking community planning, farmer innovation and service provision (CARE 1999 and Miiro & Boesen 2002).

Both were clearly inspired by new ideas of farmer empowerment, participation, and demand drivenness in extension.

Among the NAADS principles are :

- “empowering the farmers in agricultural advisory processes and building demand for both research and agricultural advisory services”
- “targeting agricultural services to the poor farmers”
- “participatory processes in planning, contracting, monitoring and evaluation”
- “increasing institutional efficiency through contracting out services” (MAAIF 2000, p 8)

The expected impact of CARE FIP (apart from increased food security) is:

- “Increased capacity of farmers to access, assess, adapt, experiment with, and finally adopt new technologies and farming practices” (CARE 1999, p.1)

It is very clear, however, that they are both – to different degrees – quit far in their conception, but also in their implementation as shown below, from embracing a wholly new paradigm of extension, where it is not the end result in terms of technology adoption, that is most important, it is rather the process, which empowers the farmers vis a vis their technology development, by enabling them to identify problems, work with problem solutions, find out who can provide alternative suggestions, experiment with their own and new solutions – and thus enhance their self respect, also by showing that outsiders respect what they are doing.

*FIP and NAADS: Similarities and differences in theory and practice related to service provision, enterprise selection and group work.*

The former government agricultural extension system is basically being abolished below sub county level, and in NAADS sub counties like Rubaya, this has virtually been accomplished. One result is that some NGOs, like KADFA, now resort to employing their own extensionists, in the KADFA case to work with the Extension Link and Contact Farmers.

The NAADS principle is that government extension will be replaced by private agricultural service providers contracted by sub county Farmers Fora to work with NAADS registered groups of farmers, thus in theory enhancing their responsiveness to farmer demands. Retrenched extension officers were, among others, expected to look for such contracts as service providers, but at least in an isolated sub county like Rubaya, this has not happened, resulting in a shortage of service providers (CEED 2003). Possibly because of this shortage service providers have in practice been contracted at sub county level to establish a demonstration plot for a given crop in each Parish, with little access or influence by the many groups existing in the villages in each Parish. The Rubaya sub county Farmers Forum first decided to make a contract for fish farming before groups had even submitted their needs. Later they added an Irish potato contract, following the wish of the majority of groups.<sup>20</sup> Most groups, however, had requested a combination of several enterprises, which NAADS could not cater for

CARE FIP from its inception employed its own field staff to facilitate community planning as well as – in practice - agricultural extension. As shown above, FIP basically worked with communities in extended planning sessions, where field staff and communities gained fairly intimate knowledge of each other, and out of which more loosely knit groups emerged to work with agricultural and NRM innovations, sometimes even consisting of most of the community members participating in planning.

Like in NAADS, the FIP groups have been working with selected “enterprises”, in FIP actually in most cases introduction of new varieties of Irish potatoes. It has not been easy, however, to establish how Irish potatoes were selected. In most group discussions members could easily explain why, including their commercial importance and potential to give quick returns , but it

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<sup>20</sup> Information from AHI/NAADS progress reports and workshop proceedings March to July 2002, available at AHI office, Kabale



was hard to avoid the feeling that FIP staff had not tried to hide that Irish potatoes would be a good idea, yielding also some tangible support in terms of improved seeds and pesticides for the experimental plot. CARE FIP has also identified at least one community based service provider for Irish potatoes in Rubaya, with whom they are now trying to establish cooperation.

It is a seed potato grower, member of Uganda National Seed Potato Producers Association (UNSPPA), who, after getting the certificate from a NARO supported farmer field school, have been teaching fellow farmers potato growing. His only remuneration has been lunch – and the prospect of getting more customers for his seeds! He did however want to tender for a NAADS contract, but could not qualify as he lacks a diploma, but FIP is now looking for a way to complement NAADS' service providers. Actually there are other seed potato growers operating in a similar way in Rubaya, who graduated from the same farmer field school, but did not obtain a certificate. Ways might be found to co-opt them as community based service providers as well.

While NAADS' diploma requirement entrenches the traditional disrespect for local capacities to learn from own experiences and experiments, use of community based service providers at the same time gives the user groups more influence, and perhaps more importantly enhances their respect for the community's own capacities.

The other major activity taken up by FIP groups, besides potato experiments, has been tree planting as an element in NRM. In this, FIP has been able to link village groups to NGOs like ICRAF, as service providers for training and tree seeds. Perhaps more important, village conservation projects established by ICRAF and NEMA have shown to be able to function as community based service providers in the form that village groups visit, discuss experiences, and are provided with seeds.

It still remains to be solved generally how some remuneration can be raised and exchanged between groups and community based service providers. In the NAADS framework it has turned out to be virtually impossible to raise just the 2% co-financing so far expected from beneficiaries. It is not unlikely though, that it will be easier to work out arrangements at the level of individuals, individual groups and single enterprises – like with the potato seed producer.

Both NAADS and FIP work through farmer groups. Indeed group mobilization has been an amazing and unexpected success for NAADS in Rubaya, to the extent of undermining its mode of operation. In the first half of 2002 AHI had been contracted to undertake a rushed mobilization and sensitization exercise in Rubaya sub county. Half a year later a very large number of groups were registered, variably stated as between 4 and 500 with some 7000 members, of which at least 200 groups are said to be active, and more actually did submit their enterprise selection and workplan, the largest number going for Irish potatoes<sup>21</sup>. The huge number of groups (each at the same time much smaller in size than had been expected)

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<sup>21</sup> Also from AHI/NAADS progress reports and workshop proceedings March to July 2002, available at AHI office, Kabale.

effectively prevented the replacement of the provisional sub county Farmers Forum established in 2001 with selected Parish representatives, by a “statutory” one with two representatives from each group, which would have had between 500 and 1000 members, rendering it practicably unworkable. As nobody knows what to do the provisional FF is still there, being increasingly seen as un-representative by group members, who have demanded establishment of Parish Farmer Fora. In Rukinda sub county such institutions have actually been formed, while the Farmers Forum in Rubaya has managed to discourage it, as being illegal under NAADS regulations (CEED 2003).

The vary large number of groups has also resulted in increasing frustration, as only few of them have been able to attract one of the scarce service provider activities (fishponds and demonstration plots). Furthermore rumours abound, that initial expectations were raised (not stating by whom) that NAADS benefits would include money and inputs – the contrary of course being true, except for those sub county decision makers succeeding in demanding “kickbacks”<sup>22</sup>. On the other hand, some of the NAADS groups that have managed to attract a NAADS demonstration, have also in reality received free inputs, most likely from sub county non-conditional-grants or LGDP funds (other sources of government funds), but not easily distinguishable by group members or other villagers, and all adding to the frustration of that majority of groups and their members that have had no response at all to their efforts!

Such frustrations and discussions finally cannot but help to entrench the old conception of extension as being mainly useful as the provider of free inputs.

1½ year after starting work on the ground only about 20 so called FIP groups had been established following completion of participatory community planning. These groups however were closely followed and supported by FIP field staff, who also provided some inputs for the experiments, although CARE has also in principle abandoned provision of free hand-outs.

#### *FIP farmer experiments*

The most basic difference between NAADS and CARE FIP, however, is that NAADS both conceptually and structurally is limited to provide traditional demonstration type transfer of technology, and is limited to a one crop – one season demonstration. CARE FIP although it is also limited to single crop groups, it can, by working with a group over several seasons acquire a broader farming systems like outlook. More importantly CARE FIP, with its introduction of farmer group experiments, is, at least in principle, challenging the transfer of technology and supremacy of scientific knowledge basis of traditional extension.

The experimental extension method has much in common with farmer field schools, in that both are time intensive, working regularly with groups throughout a growing season (or more), and in that they focus on self-learning within the group, studying what happens with the crop, signs of why, and compares and tries to understand differences in the working of different interventions.

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<sup>22</sup> reported in the above AHI/NAADS sources

CARE FIP facilitated experimental groups comparing Irish potato varieties, and different treatments in pseudo scientific layouts. “Indigenous” (in fact earlier imported) varieties were compared with improved (hybrid) varieties under no or some chemical treatment. All were grown on ridges, although flat cultivation is the conventional way in Rubaya (Box 6.1 and 6.2).

**Box 6.1 FIP facilitated experimental group in Hamabaale.** Interview with members in Hamabaale village, incl. the group chairman, who is also the tree nursery chairman, the LC1 gen.secr. and info.secr., the chairman for the potato experiments, the chairman for the Hamabaale/Rule stretcher group, the secretary for the orphanage, and the chairman for the abataka (native peoples) stretcher group, 13 -5 -2003.

The village started with 2 FIP groups meeting on different days, the Irish potato group and the tree nursery group, but they are now merging. The group has 14 members after some individuals have started their own home tree nurseries after realizing that the group seedlings would not be sufficient for all the members.

CARE FIP staff helped the group to start as result of the community planning exercise, and gave them guidelines on how to start as a group. The experimental group started with Irish potato as a crop because they grow very fast and take a little time to harvest. The Irish potato experiments were for comparing the different varieties as far as yields were concerned. The choice to become a tree group was in order to address the land management problems in the area, particularly in being able to control soil erosion. The trees would then be used as a stabilizer of terrace bunds together with grasses.

The group agreed that food and income were the most important issues. Irish potatoes would be able to serve both purposes. Other crops would be tested later. The group said that the most important food crops are sweet potatoes, beans and sorghum (See also section 1). The most marketable crops are beans, Irish potatoes and cabbages. Those who normally sell Irish potatoes are those who would plant up to 3 sacks of the crop. The potato group members had been growing potatoes, but for food mainly, indicating less wealth. Presently the group is experimenting so as to select a variety that would yield for both eating and sale purposes. Most people irrespective of their wealth grow and sell beans.

The first potato experiment last season compared 4 varieties and sprayed with non-sprayed potatoes. All potatoes were however grown on ridges. Seeds for two improved varieties, *Kiniji* and *Victoria*, were provided by CARE FIP, for two

Local varieties, *Kuruza* and *M bumba* by members. Members worked once a week on the field and discussed the progress. The group recorder recorded the conclusions. The results were that the sprayed potatoes yielded more than the non sprayed, except that it was more or less the same for *Kuruza*. There was no big difference between the varieties in terms of yield (numbers harvested compared with number of seeds) but *Kiniji* were bigger, so it was concluded that *Kuruza* was the best for food, while *Kinigi* was the best for sale.

The group does not now individually have seed for *Kinigi*, but intend to multiply the seed and share it among themselves. The group does not yet know where to get the seeds from, but if need arises they would inquire with FIP. If they get money they may buy seeds. Other people are also learning about the new varieties, and asking for seeds.

The group in future hopes to start a savings and credit scheme, by first contributing a fixed sum. The profit could help them to buy seeds and grow more for sale. The funds can also be used for those who borrow to buy chemicals for spraying. It has always been the groups priority to purchase a spraying pump, but they have been constrained by finances. Now they use an open basin, dip in a broom and spray their crops. The parish pump is hard to access due to too many user groups in need of it.

The experimentation had also been tried by individual members comparing different crops, eg bush and climbing beans. Climbing beans can grow where there is lean soil as compared to the bush beans. They made these observations after growing an entire plot with climbing beans. Because the land has different soil depths, yields tend to differ, and thus one is able to judge which soil depth or type is good for a specific crop.

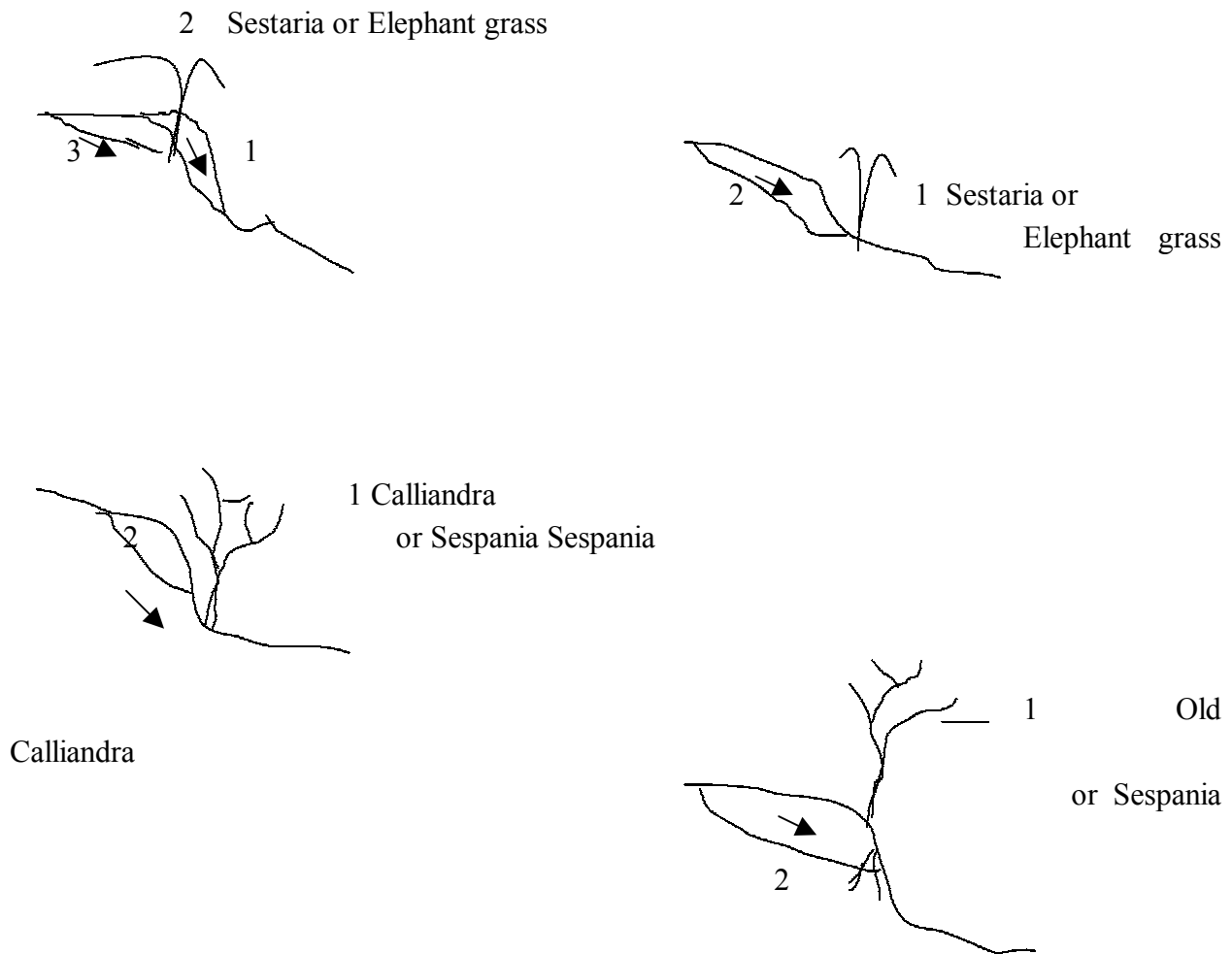
Hamabaale village soil conservation group; Group chairman and nursery group chairman 4/12-2002.

The soil conservation initially is for one particular slope, as demonstration for the whole village. The idea is to adapt the “traditional” system of breaking terraces to let them reform to avoid uncontrolled landslides when they get too high. When the terraces had more commonly become boundaries, breaking terraces was regarded almost

as stealing soil – sometimes an “owner” would declare a claim on the lower field since it had his soil! But both were under a certain pressure to break when the terrace got too high, as it may fall during rain, damaging growing crops on both field. So now a strictly implemented LC1 bye law has been put in place with fines for owners refusing to break terraces, and for coming late to work, which include all villagers, since this is a demonstration for all villagers, who will expect to be helped later in turn. There are 17-20 land owners on the relatively small slope. Not all the slope members are also nursery members, but all got some trees from there. Some have also planted bananas and coffee.

There has been on FIP facilitated cross visit to Nyakibanda, A NEMA demonstration watershed, and some to ICRAFs research station. Since then they have done all on their own, since no FIP staff have been there to look!. They started breaking the terraces from the bottom, and have almost reached the top, except for one big terrace in the middle, where they have broken some and left the rest to get softer in the rain, and some terraces below fields they had cultivated to plant peas. So where they cultivate they don't break before regrowth of crops or weeds is enough to prevent erosion. Where they break the terrace they plant Sestaria grass along every second bund, Elephant grass along every second. Sestaria they acquire at a relatively low price from relatives in Rwanda, where it was introduced long ago, and enforced by strict bye laws. Elephant grass they got from neighbours who got the seeds from Kabale. Here and there there is a local plant the use to stabilize terraces, which is also used for ropes and mats and has a local name that actually translates into “ropes”. They also plant Calliandra or Sespania trees from the nursery. See fig.6.1.

They learned such methods from ICRAF, which allows more frequent breaking of terraces and thus spread the good soil up, but of course also down, which they say it is then not a problem, as everybody also get good soil from above!



**Figure 6.1 Different ways of breaking and stabilizing a terrace**

**Box 6.2 FIP facilitated experimental group in Bishaki Village.** Interview 16-5-03 with chairman, secretary, treasurer, defence secretary, 3 female and a male member and 9 other women and a host of children!

The group is called Bishaki Twembeche (let's unite for development). (Note: it seems that rukiga has no word for group, at least it is not in any of the names, and not translated, but the english group is used also when speaking in rukiga!) It was started 14th October 2002. As the name says its purpose is to unite and develop as they can achieve more together than individually.

It has 44 members, of whom 34 are women, 10 are men. First they say it is because the men are away working in the tea estates, that the 10 members are almost all those that remain, but also that some do not like what is being done. For the migrants to be members, would have financial consequences as they would accumulate huge arrears of unpaid fines for not participating on workdays while being away.

When FIP came they were eager to take up FIP activities, which were introduced without normal community planning. Instead they sat in a village meeting to form a group for this purpose, even though the village already had other groups, such as stretcher groups. The LC1 chairman is not a member, whereas the vice chairman and secretary are.

Group activities:

- 1 Growing Irish potatoes
- 2 Variety trials for bean root rot resistance
- 3 Work for others to earn money as saving and credit group

#### 4 Tree planting

##### Irish Potatoes

This activity was introduced by CARE FIP, bringing Victoria and Kiniji seed varieties for them to plant, and suggesting planting in one line instead of two per ridge. The purpose is to have improved seeds, high yields and getting money quickly (potatoes mature fast).

Only after much probing is there a woman who explains the experimental aspect, that they tried the two new and two traditional (Mbumba and Kuruza) varieties, each with a sprayed and non sprayed plot. Victoria turned out to be high yielding with bigger size, Kiniji failed due to disease. Without spraying, however, Kuruza gives better yield!

The harvest is now stored to be used as seed again, using the new method, once the seed has been multiplied sufficiently they will divide them to be used as home seed. Although they say they will experiment again to check the result it seems clear the real purpose is seed multiplication.

All members were already growing potatoes before, and knew where to buy improved seeds, but they are too expensive. None are spraying as it is too expensive and difficult to access a pump. They hope to get good yields so the group can buy a pump. They are not all equal, but some will be able to buy the chemicals required!

The women explain that they could do experiments on their own plots. They even did it before, eg with climbing beans, but now they know the method better.

##### Beans

The FIP group has received beans seeds, but they have not been planted yet due to waterlogging of the designated field. Discussion shows that it is unclear whether the seeds are actually from FIP, NAADS (with which the group is registered) or from PMA (non-sectoral grant).

##### Work group

The group can be contracted through the chairman to go and work on rich peoples fields. The money has been used to hire land for Irish Potatoes experiment. Members can borrow money, which requires security in land and repayment with interest, eg 10 000 shs one month – 1000 shs interest! Women can only borrow with husbands accept of security in “his” land, if the husband is away another member have to give security.

#### *Poverty orientation*

Both FIP and NAADS are characterized by strongly expressed poverty orientation. In reality, however, neither have had a clear poverty strategy, which stands out during implementation.

The programme review of NAADS on poverty targeting (NAADS 2002) came to the same conclusion on NAADS. It summarizes that groups were formed hurriedly; with an external impetus; and that mobilization through local government leaders appealed to the progressive, elite and leaders, while “the poorer sections of the population (female headed households, disabled, elderly, among others) were perceived to be excluded (by way of both social exclusion and self-exclusion).” (Vol. 4, p. 7). The review also finds this bias in the overemphasis on new “NAADS groups” as opposed to existing pro-poor farmers groups. In Rubaya, as we have seen, there was a surge of existing groups to register as NAADS groups, so that the poverty bias of these groups is not very big (Table 4.1 above).

Table 6.1 shows how different extension agents exposed respondents to extension, demonstrations, training, etc. in the last two years before the survey.

**Table 6.1 Institutions reaching farmers with extension, demonstrations, training, etc. in the last two years.**

Institutions	% of households who have been exposed to different institutions interventions			
	Better-off	Less poor	Poorest	Total
<b>Any intervention*</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>NAADS*</b>	44	30	16	<b>26</b>
<b>CARE FIP<sup>ns</sup></b>				<b>11</b>
<b>NGOs*</b>	17	13	8	<b>11</b>
<b>KADFA**</b>	21	2	1	<b>5</b>
<b>Local Government<sup>ns</sup></b>				<b>3</b>

ns=not significant

\*=sign at 0.05 level

\*\*=sign at 0.001 level

NAADS have targeted all villages in the sub county, and it is quite impressive that 26% of the households had been reached by some NAADS extension in just over half a year, which is the time it had effectively operated by the time of the survey. KADFA similarly did not go for villages, but targeted their member groups, and did not mobilize a broad membership drive.

CARE FIP had been in about 20 villages in the sub county, but expected to continue to expand to a large part of the villages in the sub county, which was not the aim of other NGOs, which together had reached the same 11% as CARE FIP.

KADFA which have only very recently acquired a poverty orientation label reached 21% of the *better off* and virtually none in the two other strata. NAADS and the other NGOs both had a strong bias towards the *better off*. Apart from Local Government with a negligible total reach, CARE FIP is the only one of the agents that seem to reach equally across the board, to rich and poor alike. Considering that CARE FIP did not do anything deliberately to reach out to the poor, it is difficult to give any well documented reason. It may be speculated, however, that the explanation lies in the only major difference in the starting up approach between NAADS and CARE, namely the way the CARE FIP group establishment resulted directly from the participatory community planning, in which a majority of the village households participated – and thus got directly exposed to the possibility of joining the group activities.

## 7. Conclusions

The poverty analysis showed that Rubaya *is really poor* compared to other parts of Uganda, especially because of its constrained non-agricultural sector, and because people seem to be making up for that by selling food crops to get an income, which to some extent endangers their own food security. It is also clear, that although accumulation of land and livestock is less than elsewhere, there is still social differentiation, which, as shown, has repercussions for different groups of farmers' agricultural and livelihood strategies, as well as their abilities to respond to agricultural interventions.

In a livelihoods framework, however, social capital in the form of rich institutional processes and structures may replace cash income or financial capital as basis for livelihood strategies. In social capital, as in the forgoing analysis, focus is on groups and institutions, vertical and horizontal linkages between the different groups and institutions, and the values/norms that govern those linkages.

The analysis revealed that Rubaya is endowed with a rich and vibrant local civil society, which is also a potential link to larger external institutions – developmental or financial in nature. A civil society that does mirror the social differentiation, but which still, despite their somewhat lower group membership and planning participation, encompasses the poorer sections of society.

In the last 15-20 years 2-4 different community planning processes have been introduced into *and* adopted by village communities, which have proven to be able to plan and implement work on their own needs as communities. Participatory methods can make it more inclusive, as in the CARE FIP project, but disintegration into disparate planning processes, some aimed primarily to solicit demand for external support but without response, lead to community frustration. Community strengthening, which was on the contrary mentioned as positive results of participatory and visionary planning processes, includes however:

- Joint focus on the development goals of the area.
- Considering the problems of the whole village as well as unique needs of specific groups
- The receiving of improved inputs (sometimes), as demanded from government or service providers
- Establishing new local bye-laws on soil preservation
- Working together in groups and getting to know each other.
- Being able to contribute to joint work to solve village problems
- Having developed working relationships with NGOs (incl.CARE/FIP)
- Households are developing and income increasing.
- Having to clean up, dress nicely to attend the meetings

New civil society structures have mushroomed in recent years, because of new opportunities, partly opened by NGO interventions like CARE FIP. They also seem to enhance further the basis



for agricultural innovation – which also contrary to conventional thinking appear to have been there for a long time.

These new institutions included many smaller groups within each community, contributing to social security and productive cooperation for both better off and poor to the extent that multiple group membership is becoming a preferred livelihood strategy.

Contrary to the popular development discourse about Kabale district, farmers have historically invented and/or adopted basic additions to, and thus maintained their farming-systems, in response to population growth, new socio-economic conditions, and externally introduced innovations.

While this is supported by mutual communication and being organized through local groups, and by community capacities being enhanced through participatory planning processes, both NAADS and FIP, as new extension initiatives, are, though inclined in that direction, to different degrees in their conception *and* implementation far from really embracing a new paradigm , where most important would be empowering farmers on technology development, by enabling them to: identify problems; work with problem solutions; experiment with their own and new solutions; – and thus enhance their self respect, also by showing that outsiders respect, what they are doing.

FIP *is* breaking new ground in NRM, which is virtually absent in NAADS and similarly FIP is reaching both poor farmers and the better off, possibly through its participatory community planning approach!

Specifically, since NAADS can avail few agricultural service providers and enterprises, and there are few service providers locally with the diploma required by NAADS, FIP supplements NAADS by piloting complementary ways to provide demanded services, especially to poor farmers, including identifying community based service providers. Through this, FIP (or others) could also contribute to much needed capacity building among private service providers, in modern extension methods, such as field experimentation and farmer field schools. No doubt, results contracts are required to require service providers to deliver this – and to do it also to the poorest farmers!

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