Making knowledge, training and extension work for smallholder access to markets

An exploratory study on CEA’s lobby and advocacy strategy for smallholder access to markets in Africa

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Executive summary
The Civic Engagement Alliance (CEA) strategic partnership programme on Convening and Convincing (SPC&C) uses a systems approach aiming to facilitate smallholder access to inclusive markets by focusing on changing the ‘rules of the game’ that govern market systems. For example, laws, policies, industry standards, corporate practices tend to serve as barriers for effective and beneficial participation of the poor. CEA’s SPC&C programme recognizes the important role of knowledge, education, training and extension in increasing smallholder access to markets. (ICCO consortium, 2015) To further develop and strengthen this element of the lobby and advocacy strategy on inclusive market development of the alliance, and as part of its strategic partnership with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS) EDUKANS commissioned this study.

The study builds on a recent meta review on Dutch development policy for food and nutrition security development (IoB, 2017). Two main lines of recommendations are elaborated and consequently analysed using DGIS and CEA experiences in four country case studies, Benin, Uganda, Ethiopia and Kenya:

- Distinguishing smallholder farmers livelihood strategies we use Dorward’s (2009) farmer typology of ‘stepping up’, ‘stepping out’ or ‘hanging in’ farmers as part of a broader system view on agricultural transformation and rural transition in the region using DFID conceptual framework on agriculture.
- Strengthening programme coherence: we explore how formal and informal learning are part of livelihood strategies, and by applying the farmer typology in a social network approach on learning and knowledge development can strengthen inclusive value chain development.

A livelihoods perspective for more inclusive agricultural transformation
Smallholders are not a homogeneous group, and development policies should not treat them as such. The quick scan in the four country case studies showed that the Doward’s farmer typology contributes to more specific intervention strategies for smallholder farmers, women and youth. However contextualisation of the typology requires an assessment of how farmers, women and youth relate to the farmer typology, and how changes pertain to their roles and position in the rural transition process. This allows an overarching narrative for inclusive development to evolve among the CEA partners and creates a deeper understanding of intervention options and their implication.

For the L&A to be geared to system changes, a greater awareness of the larger system and its interrelations is required. Contextualisation of TOCs at policy goal level (e.g. by country-VC-target group combination) would help increase such awareness.

A Networked approach to learning
Knowledge is power, so improving smallholder farmers’ access to knowledge through dialogue tables, extension services and strengthened FOs will certainly strengthen their confidence and bargaining position and assist in gaining better access to markets. However, the coherence in institutions supporting formal and informal learning, both public and private is a major challenge and requires a stronger coordinating role of government in setting standards and regulate access.

Applying the farmer typology in relation to knowledge, training and education we conclude that developing a deeper understanding on the ‘demand side’ of the dynamic training and education market place can be used to develop a livelihoods approach to ATVET. This would imply amongst others:

- Explicit attention to stepping out farmers: off-farm skills development can be a suitable intervention helping to escape poverty.
• Taking learning capacities of farmers, youth and women seriously, training should aim to build on rather than replace existing knowledge and include life skills, soft skills and business development competencies instead of the traditional focus on technical crop production issues.

Based on systems-based concepts of social networks and learning in action, we argue for a stronger experimental or probing practice in MSP fora such as dialogue tables and skills platforms. This can be seen as part of the research and evidence-based approach to L&A and offer CSO partners a clear role as neutral conveners.
1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Civic Engagement Alliance (CEA), a strategic partnership of 6 Dutch development organisations and their partners in the global South, has been implementing the Convening and Convincing programme since 2016. As part of the strategic partnership, the programme contributes to the larger food and nutrition security policy of the Dutch ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS) aiming to create the conditions for just economic, social and political development, ensuring that civil society organisations (CSOs) can contribute to decreasing inequality and injustice in societies. Strengthening of lobbying and advocacy (L&A) capacity of CSOs is central to the theory of change which is build up around four pathways of change:

1. Political space for CSOs
2. Realising the right to adequate food and nutrition
3. Small-producer empowerment and inclusive markets
4. Moving towards a sustainable private sector

The current study focus is on Pathway three, small-producer empowerment and inclusive markets, for which the intervention strategy is based on ICCO’s Markets for the Poor (M4P) approach (ICCO, 2015).

Edukans, one of the Dutch partners in the alliance, contributes to the programme through its expertise and track record in education, capacity development and skills development as a foundation for the empowerment of small-scale producers, and inclusive market development. Based on its experiences in the first two years of the programme, Edukans commissioned the current study to draw lessons from literature and practice on the role of training, education and extension to making agricultural market development inclusive for small farmers.

The study is to contribute insights and recommendations on strategic strengthening of the knowledge, learning and skills development elements of the larger CEA Convening and Convincing programme. A selection of policy recommendations will be shared and discussed with DGIS under the strategic partnership arrangements.

1.2 Inclusive development policy: a grounded theory

Starting point for this study is the recent meta-review of Dutch development policy on food and nutrition security (IoB, 2017). The review, including several country programme evaluations (for Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda) and a literature review offers an overview of and insight into Dutch Development policy implementation over the period 2012-2016. Addressing the four dimensions of Food and Nutrition Security, i.e. availability, accessibility, stability and utilisation of food, the Dutch food and nutrition security (FNS) policy had the following objectives as set out in the two policy letters of 2011 and 2014:

- Increased sustainable agricultural production
- Improved access to nutritious food
- Improved enabling business environment

The review identified pathways for reaching each policy objective thus providing a coherent intervention logic with underlying assumptions. CEA’s strategic partnership programme relates to the first and third objective of the FNS policy. Its lobby and advocacy’s main contribution is to pathways on value chain development, agricultural extension and strengthening of farmer organisations.

In line with ongoing debates on pro-poor effectiveness, the study makes a point of reviewing the identified pathways on its effectiveness in reaching smallholder farmers and to a lesser extent in reaching women.
The current study elaborates two lines of recommendations from the review in a desk study. Consequently we analyse their implications using DGIS and CEA experiences in four country case studies in Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia and Benin. Research questions were formulated and validated in this so called ‘quick scan’, drawing on document reviews and (skype) interviews with resource persons including national partners, embassy staff and independent resource persons. Findings were brought together in a SWOT analysis per country. The policy desk study, the country scans and the resulting SWOT analysis were presented and discussed in a workshop with CEA representatives.

1.3 Recommendations for inclusive development to be validated.

The IoB evaluation provides some useful insights on why the policy, geared towards production and productivity increases, tend to produce or at least reinforces unequal results and outcomes, most often in favour of larger scale and better-off farmers. A major factor in all programmes remains the well-known ‘development bias’ which Robert Chambers (Chambers, 1980) highlighted, pointing out the need for corrective programme design measures. As you will see in the following chapters, many useful lessons and design measures on making interventions more inclusive, are drawn by the review. Yet, based on the review’s policy recommendations and the broader literature we chose to further elaborate on two main messages for strengthening smallholder farmers’ access to markets.

- **Use of a farmer typology as part of a vision on rural transitions**
  Recognising that ‘smallholder farmers’ is too broad a category, to make a meaningful distinction in developing strategies for inclusive development, the review recommends using a farmer typology. We follow the review in its proposed typology based on livelihoods aspirations as presented by Dorward (Dorward A., 2009) and used by DFID in their conceptual framework on agriculture (DFID, 2015). As such the typology links farmers livelihood strategies to broader economic and social change, the use of Doward’s farmer typology calls for a vision on the transformation and change processes that shape poor people’s lives. More specifically, it calls for making this vision and understanding explicit as a dynamic and complex process of change. This allows for a clearer role division as well as for a deeper understanding of the interlinkages between local, national and international levels in integrated ‘food systems’. Building a common understanding of the larger transition processes in Africa’s rural economy is essential to ensuring inclusive agricultural transformation that leaves no one behind.

- **Look for complementarity and use a social network perspective.**
  Recognising the complexity of rural transitions and the required systems perspective, the IoB review is outspoken about the need to strengthen programme coherence, seen in broad terms of collaboration and coordination among various actors in the sector. The aim is to find complementarity, recognise stakeholders’ interests and engage in joint action. We take this further by exploring how in a systems approach to inclusive market development, knowledge, education and training can be strengthened by applying a livelihoods perspective as reflected in the farmer typology.

In the following chapter, we will take a closer look at how the proposed farmer typology can be used to ensure more inclusive development policy and practice. We will also look at elements to be used for a coherent and explicit vision on the desired change in agricultural transformation and rural change. Rather than starting from scratch, we make effective use of the DFID conceptual framework on agriculture (DFID, 2015), and IFPRI’s framework on smallholder farms transformation (Shenggen, 2013) as a starting point for a broader understanding of these societal change processes in the four country case studies.

In chapter three we zoom in on knowledge, education and training and how these can contribute to innovations in sustainable agricultural production and inclusive value chain development. We will make explicit use of a systems perspective to better understand how social networks of actors can make sense of the complex transformation processes and what role knowledge and training can play in empowering smallholder farmers to pursue their livelihood strategies, be it ‘stepping up’, ‘hanging in’ or ‘stepping out’.
2 Smallholder farmers in a bigger picture of rural transition

2.1 Agriculture as a driver of change

Thinking about the role of agriculture in development has evolved over time, and agricultural change is increasingly being seen in a broader economic context as part of a structural transformation. Traditionally, agriculture has been an important engine of growth and social and economic transformation. In this context, economic transformation refers to the transformation of a low-income economy which is predominantly agricultural to one that is predominantly based on manufacturing and services, with agriculture receding to less than 10% and eventually to only 2% of GDP. This is accompanied by a shift from largely subsistence farming, and often underutilisation of land and labour on the larger farms, to commercial agriculture with the dominant small-scale commercial farms producing a large and growing proportion of their crops for sale. Concurrently, there is a demographic shift from a predominantly rural population to a largely urban one, concentrated in big cities.

Two forces drive agricultural transition. Firstly, rising labour productivity increases production beyond subsistence. Secondly, improved infrastructure, especially roads, improve access to markets and increase the availability and decreases the cost of a wide range of manufactured consumer goods as well as making new technology more profitable.

Increasing agricultural labour productivity, often associated with increased land productivity, arises from technological change driven by investment in research, and infrastructure, mainly by public sector institutions. While agriculture is a predominantly private sector activity, agricultural investments and growth can have a strong impact on poor people’s lives and are particularly sensitive to government policy and market interventions. Based on the literature and its own development practice, DFID’s conceptual framework on agriculture sets out a more differentiated approach to agriculture to ensure a truly inclusive policy. In DFID’s view, successful agricultural transformation depends on a strong enabling environment being in place. Broad-based agricultural transformations that leave no one behind require public interventions to address coordination and market failures, to invest in public goods, in particular rural roads and infrastructure, to conduct agricultural research, and to create an enabling policy environment and investment climate. This view on agricultural transformation, strongly influenced by development economics, reflects the concerns about the lagging transformation in Sub Saharan Africa. With a rapid population increase and urbanisation well on its way, Africa’s increase in agricultural production since the 1990s was based more on area expansion than productivity gain and has been significantly lower than in other areas (See figure 2). Recent decades have also seen a growing awareness and concern over increasing inequalities and the vulnerability of rural populations who depend on agriculture, and the poorest urban consumers – particularly in the face of threatening climate instability.

Figure 2 Average yield of cereals (t/ha) for four major geographical areas (IoB, 2017)

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DFID adopts a twin strategy: on the one hand, promoting agricultural transformation (‘stepping up’) focused on commercialisation and agroindustry development, to create jobs and raise incomes; and on the other hand, facilitating a long-term rural transition from subsistence agriculture to off-farm job opportunities as these emerge (from ‘hanging in’ to ‘stepping out’).
2.2 A livelihoods-based farmer typology

Smallholders are not a homogeneous group, and development policies should not treat them as such. Over recent years policies have started to distinguish between various kinds of smallholders and their development pathways. While a distinction between subsistence, market-oriented and commercial smallholders seems straightforward, this does not do justice to the growing variety of livelihood strategies farmers adopt that include some form of market orientation.

Anticipating agricultural transformation and rural transition, it is useful to distinguish different groups of smallholder farmers according to their livelihood strategies. In line with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ food security policy evaluation (IoB, 2017) we follow DFID conceptual framework on agriculture in distinguishing three groups of smallholder farmers according to their livelihood approach, as proposed by Dorward et al (Dorward A., 2009):

‘Hanging In’, where assets are held and activities are engaged in to maintain livelihood levels, often in the face of adverse socio-economic circumstances;

‘Stepping Up’, where current activities are engaged in, with investments in assets to expand these activities, in order to increase production and income to improve livelihoods (an example might be accumulation of productive dairy livestock);

‘Stepping Out’, where existing activities are engaged in to accumulate assets which in time can provide a base or ‘launching pad’ for moving into different activities that have initial investment requirements leading to higher and/or more stable returns – for example accumulation of livestock as savings which can then be sold to finance children’s education (investing in the next generation), the purchase of vehicles or buildings (for transport or retail activities), migration, or social or political contacts and advancement.

Using these farmer typologies, Doward points out, has the distinct advantage of simplifying communication about a more complex understanding of livelihood strategies of poor people. It both recognises the importance of people’s current livelihoods (in terms of ‘hanging in’ and ‘stepping up’, where appropriate) and directs attention beyond those livelihoods to consider wider and longer-term aspirations of ‘stepping out’, how these aspirations may be pursued, and how they affect current livelihood activities. This in turn draws attention to questions about broader economic, institutional and social change.

A typology, by its very nature, runs the risk of becoming a short cut if it is not contextualised for the particular area or region. Simply talking about ‘stepping up farmers’ as the more commercially oriented farmers without specifying the mix and range of livelihood dimensions fails to do justice to either the group in question or the context. The farmer typology needs to be ‘filled in’ with a context-specific understanding.

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3 The definition of smallholders differs between countries and between agro-ecological zones. In favourable areas with high population densities, they often cultivate less than one ha of land, whereas they may cultivate 10 ha or more in semi-arid areas or manage 10 head of livestock.
of people’s livelihood strategies. It should be noted that contextualising this farmer typology can also be useful in identifying specific intervention strategies for youth and women.

**Public private roles in geographical distinct areas**

Applying Doward’s farmer typology in geographically distinct areas allows for a clearer division of roles in public and private contributions to agricultural development. Where DFID adopts a geographical distinction of so called ‘dynamic, intermediate and hinterland’ areas to distinguish the level of potential and opportunity, IFPRI specifies these opportunities in terms of fulfilment of hard and soft constraints to turn agricultural enterprise into profitable undertakings. The potential to turn production systems into profitable enterprises is greatest among the subsistence farmers who are facing soft constraints—such as limited financial and human capital and asymmetric access to markets and information—that can be addressed through various policy and programmatic channels. Hard constraints—such as marginal lands that are far from markets, are limited in size, and have extremely low rainfall and soil quality—severely hamper the ability of other smallholders to increase their production capacity and move toward profitable farming systems.

Using these geographical distinctions allows a clearer perspective on specific roles for public and private actors. For example, in public policy and rural institution building for so called intermediate zones there needs to be an explicit focus on small-scale family farming, and a role of the state that goes beyond the minimal role of ‘creating an enabling environment’. Current FNS policies with their emphasis on a minimal role of the state for an enabling environment tend to be geared towards dynamic zones. Using this geographical distinction would allow a redefined role of the state and bring it back as a key driver of rural transitions and promoter of rural poverty reduction. 

This is clearly recognisable in the African Union’s Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP, see box below), which forms an important framework for national policy development. Combining the farmer typology and geographical distinction we built a framework for interventions as part of rural transition processes in table 1. Such a framework could assist in building a shared understanding of the kind of interventions supportive to different types of smallholders. Rather than using this as a blueprint but as a conceptual framework for dialogue in positioning the L&A programme in larger processes of rural transition. While the extremes of high potential dynamic zones and the hinterland areas are probably (DFID, 2019) most outspoken and clear, the bulk of rural poor live in the so-called intermediate zones calling for more adaptive strategies. We like to notice the relevance albeit in different forms of knowledge, training and learning in all situations.

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**The Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme:**

African Heads of State and the African Union have responded to the need for agricultural development through the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), which was established in 2003 as the overarching framework to drive agriculture-led economic growth and transformation on the continent. In 2015 African Heads of State and the African Union reaffirmed and expanded their original commitments in the Malabo Declaration, which set ambitious targets for 2015-2025 to:

- Uphold or further increase 10% public spending in the agriculture sector;
- At least double agriculture productivity;
- Reduce post-harvest losses at least by half;
- End hunger and reduce stunting to 10%;
- Halve poverty through inclusive agriculture growth (sustaining 6% agriculture GDP growth);
- Create jobs for at least 30% of the youth in agriculture value-chains;
- Triple intra-Africa trade in agricultural commodities;
- Ensure at least 30% of farm/pastoral households are resilient to shock.

An important innovation of CAADP which was further reinforced by the Malabo Declaration is the promotion of evidence-based policy planning and implementation, including the embracing of robust and inclusive review and dialogue processes at the country and continental levels. As African governments seek to implement a more evidence-based approach to agriculture, there is a need to make the latest evidence accessible to senior leaders and to provide a forum for exchange with leading thinkers on agricultural development. In this way, a real opportunity has arisen to improve the impact and effectiveness of African government policy-making in the target sectors From DFID paper on Malabo panel (business case) 2017
Table 1 Intervention strategies using the typology of smallholder farms in geographical areas (Adjusted from (Shenggen, 2013) and (DFID, 2015))

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farm type</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Agriculture-based</th>
<th>Transforming</th>
<th>Transformed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subsistence Farms</td>
<td>Hinterland Zones: Farms without Profit potential</td>
<td>• Education and training for nonfarm employment</td>
<td>• Improved access to housing, education and health services for rural migrants</td>
<td>• Social Safety nets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intermediate Zones: Farms with Profit potential</td>
<td>• Migration to urban centers and other agriculture areas with greater profit potential</td>
<td>• Education and training for non-farm employment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Domestic and regional food supply chains with potential for ‘quiet revolution’</td>
<td>• Social safety nets</td>
<td>• Flexible arrangements for land transfer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>but with significant coordination problems (e.g. side selling risks preventing investment); Emerging small-scale farmers with commercial potential but high transaction costs.</td>
<td>• Productive social safety nets</td>
<td>• Access to innovative financial services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Limited access to markets and information</td>
<td>• Investment in infrastructure, agricultural research and extension, and small-holder-friendly and climate-smart technologies</td>
<td>• Social safety nets</td>
<td>• Access to market information (e.g., ICTs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Limited financial capital</td>
<td>• Improving investment climate</td>
<td>• Pro-smallholder, nutrition-sensitive value chains</td>
<td>• Vertical and horizontal coordination to meet safety, quality, and quantity standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Limited access to infrastructure</td>
<td>• Promoting market coordination, interventions to address market failures (e.g. M4P)</td>
<td>• Vertical and horizontal coordination to meet safety, quality, and quantity standards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Limited access to smallholder friendly technologies</td>
<td>• Support for institutional arrangements, including contracting and farmer organisations, that reduce transaction costs.</td>
<td>• Horizontal coordination to meet safety, quality, and quantity standards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamic Environment</td>
<td>Commercial Smallholder farms</td>
<td>• Smallholder-focused, climate-smart, and nutrition-enhancing technologies</td>
<td>• Enhanced role of farmers’ organisations, particularly for women farmers</td>
<td>• High-value crops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Established markets for global value chains and urban supermarkets, i.e. linked to ’modern revolutions’ Top 5-10% of smallholder farms</td>
<td>• Investment in infrastructure, agricultural R&amp;D, and extension</td>
<td>• High-value and nutrition sensitive food chains</td>
<td>• Flexible arrangements for land transfer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Soft-constraints</td>
<td>• Vertical and horizontal market coordination to meet safety, quality, and quantity standards</td>
<td>• Links to urban and global markets</td>
<td>• Clear regulatory frameworks and intellectual property rights to link private sector with smallholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Limited access to capital, insurance, and other risk reduction tools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legenda: **Stepping Up** **Hanging In** **Stepping Out** **In bold: interventions with a knowledge and learning component**
2.3 Exploring the farmer typology in the CEA programme context

What can we learn from CEA experiences in target group specific approaches and how can a contextualised typology of small farmers further a more inclusive value chain development?

In our four country case studies we found the policy officers of the Netherlands Embassies (EKN) quite familiar with the farmer typology. Although no reference is made to a farmer typology in the new multi-annual strategic plans (MASP), the programmes tend to emphasize increased agricultural production in high potential areas or ‘dynamic zones’ while food security concerns are prioritised in ‘hinterland’ areas. Under the new Development and Trade agenda, the programmes main emphasis is on VC strengthening in specific sectors (like dairy and horticulture) in specific regions with a high natural resources potential and a more dynamic enabling environment. This implies a choice to address the ‘stepping up’ farmers. The embassy’s MASP do pay attention to youth and women but no specific strategies or pathways are provided. All four embassy MASP Programmes also include a section on food security. These programmes in regions with a low natural resources and market potential contribute to access to food through direct cash transfers and a productive safety net. A growing number of ATVET training projects are geared to ‘hanging in’ farmers and youth. Youth employment programmes with skills training are framed in terms of migration concerns rather than of a larger vision on agricultural transition in which ‘stepping out’ strategies have a role to fulfil.

The CEA programme strategies in the four quick scan countries indicate a similar focus on specific value chains and geographical areas. While these strategic choices are implicitly geared towards poorer sections of the smallholder communities, references to livelihood strategies remained anecdotal. The more implicit target group choice can in part be attributed to the familiarity of local partners with these communities and could also be influenced by programme implementation priorities to build up L&A capacity first.

All four countries have been active members in the CAADP process and invested in improved regulatory policy frameworks. With varying degrees in operational space for civil society organisations, all four countries have shown that policy priorities are in place to make agricultural transformation an engine of economic development. This provides the CEA partners good entry points for their lobby and advocacy programme.

Applying the DFID framework on our four case studies in fig. 6, we get an impression of how they position themselves in relation to one another in terms of agricultural transformation. The Beninese women in the shea VC and the ageing farmers in the regional VC for food crops like maize, cassava and millet in North Eastern Uganda could be seen as adopting ‘hanging in’ strategies in rather remote settings. The other cases in Kenya, Ethiopia, and the cashew farmers in Benin involve slightly larger farms, with a stronger market orientation in a more dynamic environment.

An example where the farmer typology was applied in analysing livelihood strategies was the dairy clusters in Kenya. In a study, commissioned by the Dutch embassy, researchers used a model (see fig. 7) in which farming systems evolve in interaction with markets and within a larger context of the so-called enabling environment (Lee, 2018). In table 2 we applied the model to contextualise the farmer typology for the Ethiopian highlands using our own data from the country case study. We think such a model could create more clarity and offer a useful framework to develop more target group-specific interventions.
Using the farmer typology by analysing livelihoods strategies, including those of youth and women, could assist in developing a shared understanding in how different livelihood strategies are used in addressing larger transformation in the agricultural economy of the area. Based on such a deeper understanding of the ongoing processes of change and transformation, and the related systemic challenges people phase, more target group-specific L&A strategies and agendas could be developed.

The model could also prove helpful in identifying issues for action research and probing to feed the evidence-based stakeholder dialogue we will explore further in chapter three.

Table 2 Contextualising farmer typology, using the case of Ethiopia

Although seemingly obvious it is worth noting that within a dynamic zone with relatively favourable conditions for market access, we identified different livelihood strategies and related ‘farmer types’. Making this distinction can assist in developing specific intervention strategies according to these ‘farmer types’.

**Youth as a specific target group**

The overall dominance of on-farm income generation strategies among African farmers is being challenged by youth. With their better access to education and (urban) knowledge and information, and growing uncertainties/risks, a more diverse pattern of on-farm and off-farm income streams develops. (Davis, 2017). Clapp (2013) recently stated that these small producers are therefore involved in markets, but do not necessarily adopt a ‘market logic’, which would include a mode of production largely based on profit maximisation. Instead, they ‘cope with the market’ (based on risk aversion) which can be seen as a form of ‘hanging in’. (Spoor, 2013).

Youth is seen as an important group for taking forward agricultural transition using new advances in technology and responding to a context of rapid social, economic and environmental change. Livelihood studies of young people, in particular those with limited access to land and resources, confirm that they do not necessarily view farm and non-farm activities as separate but recognise their interdependence. Anna Robinson’s study of young people’s closely interlinked on-farm and off-farm livelihood strategies demonstrated this. Her study showed that youth tend to move between different livelihood activities, at different times of the year and in their life cycle, with intermittent employment in the informal sector and...
fall-back options in agriculture in their home villages. Such strategies were observed in various African countries, including Ethiopia, and were confirmed during the case study interviews. (see box)

This means that choices they make, individually and as a group, are influenced by and impact on a multitude of actors at . To highlight only a few related interactions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local level</th>
<th>County Level/ National</th>
<th>International</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • The severe climate change-related challenges require adaptation strategies in farm production, while decreasing soil fertility and changing markets are increasing risks for young farmers
• Changes in social interaction and cohesion, for example through growing rural-urban interaction of (especially) young people results in higher cash requirements and consumption. The increasing pressure on land, ownership of which remains under the control of elders, affects intergenerational relationships, increases conflict and uncertainties, and stimulates exploration of off-farm livelihood strategies among the younger generation. | • Whereas policy-makers have often had ‘negative perceptions of migration’ (Bennell, 2011, p. 12), seasonal migration can be an important strategy by which many (young) rural people are coping with the multiple risks outlined above (Robinson-Pant, 2016).
• Access to knowledge, learning and education is getting more competitive and costlier. Increasingly, private service providers in training and education put a price tag on training, effectively limiting access for young people from poorer rural households, women and PWD. | • Government policies on food security and employment creation in Ethiopia (and many other African countries) encouraged the growth of ‘super farms’ through selling or renting large areas of agricultural land to foreign investors. Local stakeholders have had little voice in such decisions, while they have further increased land scarcity and pressure, especially for the youth. |

3 Knowledge, Training & Education for inclusive market development

In this chapter we take a closer look at how formal and informal learning are part of livelihood strategies, and how a social network approach on learning and knowledge development can support inclusive value chain development.

We start by taking a systems perspective on learning and innovation and explore how building connections among formal and informal learning opportunities can help overcome some of the typical challenges of sectoral government institutions. Analysing some recent trends and challenges in agricultural education and extension we build an argument to make effective use of a livelihood perspective and the farmer typology to support learning and knowledge development for more inclusive value chain development.

Introducing the proposed farmer typology and using livelihoods elements in targeting system changes would offer new opportunities for advocacy-oriented initiatives in support of a more demand-driven ATVET. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, adopting a livelihoods perspective allows for more target group specific intervention strategies which can equally be applied on ATVET to make learning and training more inclusive. By applying this to the four country case studies we explore how building a context-specific understanding of perceptions and learning strategies by farmers, women, youth and PWD can assist in developing more demand-driven support in both formal and informal learning approaches.

The CEA SPC&C programme in the four quick scan countries prioritised agricultural extension rather than formal training through ATVET. While fully support of such a programme focus, we want to avoid looking at extension in isolation. We rather highlight the interrelationships with formal training and education by exploring how an awareness of the agricultural knowledge and information system (AKIS) can assist the envisaged system change, aimed for in the L&A strategy.

The potential role of formal sectoral agencies

In Benin’s cashew sector, the manifestation of a changing (positive) political will to support inclusive value chain development positively affected the organisational level of the sector with the creation of an inter-profession of the sector (IFA). An inter-profession is the supreme authority for sector development and a safe ally for CSOs to raise their voice and participate in decision making for meaningful results. This is a significant step forward and a major achievement that creates the conditions for a fruitful dialogue with the government. Thanks to the political will of the government, governmental agencies have an obligation to establish a dialogue with producers’ organisations (shea and cashew coalitions). (CEA, 2018)
3.1 Formal and informal learning

Although at an analytical level, training, education and extension can be seen as closely related institutional forms for formal and informal learning, in policy they are rarely analysed together. In most cases, agricultural extension is part of a sectoral ministry with an often-ambiguous attitude towards the service, while ATVET is usually part of the government education system. Consequently, policies and regulations on qualifications and standards in training and education in agriculture lack coherence and enforcement in many countries.

Under CAADP, several African countries (including our four country cases) have already or are in the process of putting standards and curricula in place and are working toward integrating ATVET in national and rural development plans and strategies. (Kozicka, 2018) (Kotze, 2010) A most welcome development as for many years in most African countries, vocational training has received too little attention as a means for long-term capacity development. Instead, short-term and topic-specific training and extension were given priority. This development can be seen as a part of a wider shift in the mainstream perception of the role of ATVET in development.

Integrating ATVET in rural development plans and strategies also offers opportunities to recognise and acknowledge the importance of informal learning in relation to new technologies and intergenerational transfer of agricultural skills and knowledge, as well as its potential to enhance formal training programmes. Taking greater account of processes of informal learning, not only through assessment and accreditation mechanisms, but also in curriculum and teaching/learning approaches, will contribute to the relevance and effectiveness of agricultural extension activities, adult learning programmes and the media. (Robinson-Pant, 2016)

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**Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS)**

The Dutch development policy tends to refer to the ‘Dutch Diamond Approach’ as part of the added value for international collaboration. This diamond approach refers to the successful pooling of knowledge and cooperation in public-private partnerships and evolved out of the innovation triangle in which education, research and extension are considered the engine for agricultural development and innovation. This so-called agricultural knowledge system (AKS) emerged in the 1960s and was initially a government-driven initiative to teach farmers new skills, such as how to handle tractors.

The original orientation was to diffuse knowledge to farmers and thereby unlock the knowledge embedded in products, such as the timely application of agro-chemicals to increase productivity in the agri-food sector. Over time some came to view AKS as too rigid or expensive. The policy reforms of 1990s and the privatisation of advisory services in many countries saw a move away from government driven AKS and towards multi-actor systems, in which private actors (such as input suppliers and private advising firms) came to play a larger role. The new emphasis on AKIS (with the added I from innovation) is introducing technical and social innovations into the model and is influenced by paradigm shifts towards network-driven multi-actor innovations and towards Lifelong Learning (EU, 2012).

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*Learning: knowledge is an interactive (social) process that takes place within cognitive frames (paradigms, cognitive rules and regimes) in response to problems, opportunities and challenges. Individual and/or collective learning occurs in various ways: learning by doing, social learning, transdisciplinary learning, transformative learning, etc. and is a necessary precondition for change.* (EU, 2012)
3.1.1 A livelihoods perspective on ATVET

A fundamental critique of ATVET and vocational training in general has been that it is based on a deficit model (competency gaps) and curricula are constructed based on the perceived needs of industry with a strong human resource development orientation. The growth of the informal sector in small urban centres and the precarious nature of multiple activities undertaken by poor people and especially women and youth in order to make a living, calls for a ‘turn’ to a livelihood approach as the basis for planning more appropriate TVET interventions (Kotze, 2010). Such a livelihoods approach to TVET would focus on the development of technical skill trainings in both agricultural and non-agricultural sectors in rural areas. Furthermore, a more entrepreneurial approach – combining technical, social and business skills – to poverty alleviation and economic development in rural and marginalised areas would offer a better fit with young people’s diverse livelihood strategies.

‘The holistic approach that young people took towards enhancing their own livelihoods contrasted with that of many TVET providers, who worked largely within their own sector. Young people’s perceptions of the strong interconnections between off-farm and on-farm activities challenged policy discourses around the divide between rural and urban, agricultural and non-agricultural employment.’ (Robinson-Pant, 2016)

As a matter of fact, influenced by educational and learning theories as well as a rapidly changing job market, the role of vocational education and training is gradually shifting. The erstwhile focus on providing job-specific skills for entry into a career is giving way to a focus on facilitating the acquisition of vocational-specific skills over a lifetime. (Kozicka, 2018) Consequently, policy and donor strategies increasingly emphasise the need for young people to learn not only foundation skills (the literacy and numeracy skills ‘necessary for getting work that can pay enough to meet daily needs’) but also transferable skills (needed to adapt to different work environments’, such as the ability to solve problems and conflict resolution) and technical and vocational skills (‘specific technical know-how for certain jobs such as growing vegetables). In relation to agricultural skills training, there is increasing recognition of the importance of developing a range of soft skills.

3.1.2 Agricultural Extension: towards learning in social networks

Following the failure of rural development projects to significantly improve the welfare of the rural poor through the mid-1980s, Africa witnessed a widespread abandonment of support for large-scale, state-run extension programs; the exception to this being the continued promotion of the Training & Visit (T&V) system by the World Bank. Since the late 1990s, interest has begun to coalesce around the potentials offered by the Farmer Field School (FFS) approach (Simpson, 2002).

Despite a renewed donor interest in supporting national extension programs, a number of serious issues within the domain of extension practice remain to be addressed. While often masked under the new titles and phrases of the current development discourse, the challenges faced today reflect many of the perennial problems that have plagued development efforts over the past 50 years. These include the challenges of: becoming truly responsive to local conditions and concerns; facilitating constructive inter-organisational collaboration; fostering greater local self-reliance through individual capacity-building and local organisational development; addressing operational funding insecurity and low educational levels of extension staff; and engaging indigenous knowledge, farmer inventiveness and farmer-to-farmer communication.

In the light of the relevance to the CEA programme two issues are worth highlighting: farmer empowerment in mutual interaction among stakeholders and the relevance of trust and social closeness.

**Empowerment: supporting farmer organisations**

Knowledge is power, so improving smallholder farmers’ access to knowledge through dialogue tables, extension services and strengthened FOs will certainly strengthen their confidence and bargaining position and assist in gaining better access to markets. Although ‘empowerment’ is promoted as a key element in this process, forms of interventions that lead to empowerment are often vaguely defined or even contested. The rural poor’s participation in local decision-making has been viewed as the main channel through which empowerment could be achieved. However, rural communities are highly differentiated, which means that ‘participation’ may not involve all social groups, while power relations and existing practices expressing them tend to ‘shape the dynamics of who participates’.
The CEA programme focus on farmer organisations is building capacities of farmer organisations (FOs) representing and empowering their members, amongst others through extension service delivery. However, asset-poor households are less likely to join a farmer organisation or cooperative (e.g. Bernard and Spielman, 2009 in (IoB, 2017)). Many studies agree that lack of social capital, human capital, landholdings, location, and access to finance all seem to be constraints. Including women and youth in these producer organisations is particularly challenging (see the Shea Benin experience). It seems worth considering how and to what extent farmers organisations can improve their role as agents of change (supporting transitional farmers) and in-service delivery of knowledge and skills development.

Also, FOs are often not strong enough to engage in commercial activities in oligopolistic markets (where a few buyers dominate trading as reportedly is the case for cashews in Benin). Thus, making farmer organisations autonomous and economically sustainable yet still inclusive of smaller and poorer farmers proves to be a challenge. Producer organisations that are more socially oriented and therefore more inclusive, may have a role to play in political lobbying but, as IoB observed, these cooperatives have been less effective in increasing sales or income for their member farmers (IoB, 2017).

Farmers on the other hand are often reluctant to register as members in view of costs (in terms of both financial and time investments) relative to its benefits. In Ethiopia, lighter forms of farmer associations are formed by small groups of ‘likeminded farmers’ who tend to be of the ‘stepping up’ type. Recognising that FOs may be more attractive to some groups of farmers than to others, and aware of possible alternatives that might be available, this seems like a typical issue that requires context-specific elaboration for which the farmer typology seems most suitable.

Social Networks:
Farmer-led extension
Farmer-led extension is gaining ground. Cost effectiveness and sustainable (government) funding are not enough to explain its growing popularity. Research on farmer led extension experiences in Uganda, showed the importance of social closeness between farmer extension facilitators and those they trained. This was evident from the socio-economic characteristics such as education, size of labour, size of land, household assets, distances from markets, and farming experiences. This familiarity enhances social interaction and wide information-sharing between the members of the two groups and contrasts sharply with the knowledge-oriented recruitment criteria for public sector extension agents (Ssemakula, 2005). Ssemakula noted that farmers access information most from farmer extension facilitators, followed by radio farming programmes, fellow farmers, NGOs, and lastly the government extension agencies. Each follower farmer contacted between 12 and 50 other farmers and the process continued. This was in line with earlier studies. In their study in Ghana and Mali, Simpson and Owens (2002) found that the farmer-to-farmer extension approach encourages communication between farmers at several levels, thereby creating a multiplier effect. The farmer field school (FFS) approach is making use of these farmer to farmer interactions. The key to success is the FFS trainer/facilitators, who must have skills in managing participatory, discovery-based learning as well as technical knowledge to guide the groups’ learning and action process (Braun & Duveskog 2008). This is often a tall order for government extension services as ATVET training of extension workers is mainly theoretical.

Empowerment outcomes reported from FFS include changes in perspectives with boosted self-confidence and pride, as well as social change and action being triggered following participation in FFS. Farmers have gained agency in terms of taking greater control over their lives.

3.2 Exploring a networked approach to learning in the CEA programme context
The quick scans provided several common characteristics of the agricultural knowledge system in the four country cases.

Given the growing young (urban) population, education and training are a thriving yet unregulated market reflected in an often-diverse mix of public and private training and extension providers. For many years, the limited interaction and weak coherence between the various actors and institutions in the AKIS resulted in a
general neglect which is evidenced by a lack of technical expertise and craftspeople at all levels and a variety of mismatches, notably between ‘demand and supply’ in knowledge products and services.

One of those of particular interest to our study and repeatedly mentioned in literature and interviews is the mismatch between extension workers’ skills and demand: extension workers, trained at ATVET, graduate with mainly theoretical knowledge on agro-production-related subjects, lacking the hands-on practical skills required in their day-to-day work, be it in extension, in commercial farms or in businesses in the value chain (Hartl, 2009). Similarly, a good number of respondents pointed at the fact that in extension services and other forms of skills development initiatives, far too little attention is paid to non-technical skills, i.e. business skills, social skills and personality skills. These skills are thought to be of critical importance for actors – whether male or female farmers, youth, poor farmers, landless or PLWD – to come up with and put in place a livelihood strategy that offers an adequate and appropriate response to the challenges in rural transition that they personally face.

3.2.1 Applying the farmer typology in extension

Extension takes a central role in the intervention strategy for Pathway 3 “small producers’ empowerment and inclusive markets”. The logic being that knowledge and information play a role in intensifying production to enable farmers to access markets. A quick assessment of CEA programme interventions that are focussing on specific types (of farmers) and (socio-demographic) target groups shows the following pattern:

Table 3 The role of extension in CEA programmes, exploring Doward’s farmer typology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Kenya</th>
<th>Ethiopia</th>
<th>Uganda</th>
<th>Benin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stepping out</td>
<td>• Active engagement in supporting youth in transition process (especially with partner Africa Youth Trust)</td>
<td>• No action!</td>
<td>• W&amp;D partner active in job booster programme.</td>
<td>• W&amp;D partner active in job booster programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Working through strengthened PO and SHG</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Youth programme (NAAD) on govt land</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Potato crop in geographical area highlands poorer agric. conditions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanging in</td>
<td>• Women farmers in rain fed agricultural production</td>
<td>• Working through communities, aging population</td>
<td>• Focus on strengthened govt. extension &amp; market policy</td>
<td>• Working with women in shea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Attention to post harvest techniques</td>
<td>• Focus on strengthened govt. extension &amp; market policy</td>
<td>• L&amp;A address implementation market act for local and regional markets</td>
<td>• Weak extension service (shea is a forgotten commodity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Focus also on staple food chains (next to more commercial chains)</td>
<td>• Crops: maize, millet &amp; cassava</td>
<td>• Crops: maize, millet &amp; cassava</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stepping up</td>
<td>• Private sector service providers</td>
<td>• Emerging farmers (&gt;3 ha) as outgrowers on 1/3 of their land (rotation)</td>
<td>• No intervention</td>
<td>• Working through effective PO in cashew (mainly men) Promote local processing in policy development and in practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Market pull leading in value chain development</td>
<td>• Model farmers extension model with peer2peer support</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Farmer led extension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Private sector lead in MSPs</td>
<td>• Crops: Barley &amp; potato</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Dairy &amp; Horticulture sector oriented</td>
<td>• Production and post harvesting oriented advice. Top-down approach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• VC embedded services</td>
<td>• Experimented with ICT: sms and radio in extension</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6 A noticeable exception is Ethiopia where the number of TVETs and Universities has increased dramatically over the last twenty years. Unfortunately, several of the mentioned problems like theoretical instead of practical nature of the extension messages, rapid turnover of extension staff do apply for Ethiopia as well.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Kenya</th>
<th>Ethiopia</th>
<th>Uganda</th>
<th>Benin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Observations | • Devolution allows for more context specific service provision. Demand driven services to be re-designed  
• Chain-embedded services gaining importance  
• Capacities are limiting factor  
• Lot of interest among donors and in Government for new/ E-technology in extension (civil society must pick up) | • Inclusiveness of PO and FMO for women and small farmers concern  
• Extension service, under resourced and overloaded with input supply and social safety net.  
• Learning capacity demonstrated in evolution of extension model | • Limited farmer connectivity affects market access  
• Large group of youth (70% rural population between 18-35yr) not specifically addressed.  
• Post-harvest and value addition to be introduced | • MSP platforms for innovation like Farmer Field Fora.  
• Knowledge exchange with research, producers & extension  
• National-level L&A claiming strong role for Civil Society representatives in policy development  
• Partnership with sector-wide umbrella agencies especially in cashews is formally recognised by public sector agents |

From the above table we can see the relevance of using a livelihoods-based typology to distinguish specific target groups such as ‘hanging in’ and ‘stepping up’ in combination with context-specific targeting on small farmers, youth, women or (less pronounced and thus a challenge) PLWD. Such a typology, enriched with context-specific insights on their interactions with markets, their livelihoods and their farming system will allow a more tailored service delivery in extension and training and give the L&A programme a clearer view on the mechanisms to be strengthened/ addressed. In annex 3 you can find a indication of how such target group specific training and extension could be developed, based on the farmer typology for the Ethiopian highlands in table 2 (page 12)

One noticeable gap in the above table is the near absence of extension-like service delivery to the ‘stepping out’ type of farmers, youngsters or elderly. The use of farmer typology and developing a shared understanding of the ongoing transformation in agricultural production and VC development would highlight the knowledge and training requirements for a ‘stepping out’ scenario as well. This could be addressed by linkages with other CEA partner programmes and would specifically address young people (realising that ‘stepping out’ is not necessarily 100% and that many will keep a combination of on- and off-farm livelihood strategies or keep agriculture as fall-back option) Given the growing diversity in livelihood strategies that combine on-farm and off-farm income streams, this seems worth further exploration by the CEA country teams.

A particular area to be clarified in any contextualisation relates to changing roles of public sector, civil society actors and private sector actors. This can be part of larger devolution processes or be a more market-driven liberalisation of services. For example, the generally growing market orientation and competition in training and education provision. Using the characterisation of remote vs dynamic contexts could be useful.

Altogether, contextualising the farmer typology in developing training and extension strategies can prove a major entry point for strengthening evidence-based L&A by CEA in steering different steps in the L&A road map e.g. identifying the research agenda, setting the policy agenda, transposing evidence to policy tasks, informing policy debates, and so on.

3.3 A networked approach to learning

How can the strength of the alliance be put to effective use in a networked approach addressing opportunities for more inclusive VC development, and what role does knowledge and education & training must play?

The SWOT analysis in the four country case studies or quick scans provides some broad insights into the strengths and weaknesses of current agricultural knowledge and innovation systems, as well as opportunities and threats in the wider socio-economic and policy environment. Table 3 below shows the common factors identified and highlights some of the country-specific observations (indicated in brackets).
What emerges from the SWOT and the earlier target group typology is the complexity of issues. This complexity is seen at various levels (household, community and national levels), and with a variety of stakeholders involved in, or influencing people’s livelihood choices.

Dealing with such complexity in a political setting with limited operational space, the CEA programmes adopted constructive dialogues as the preferred L&A strategy. This strategy uses research to produce evidence-based information to advise and convince duty bearers. So far, the research activities have been mostly limited and focused on skills assessment and more detailed analysis of value chains. Addressing such complex issues through joint experiments (probes) such as scholarship competitions, a school survey, social media campaigns and reflecting on their feedback could build a joint understanding, shared meaning and ownership of successes.

### Table 4 SWOT analysis of current knowledge and innovation systems in four case study countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths:</th>
<th>Weaknesses:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Well-developed agricultural sector policy and regulatory framework, supporting increased productivity by commercial smallholder farmers</td>
<td>- Farmers’ learning needs not sufficiently considered in design knowledge transfer systems (education, extension, research) and content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Broad policy support, and institutional capacity in national flagship programmes focussing on smallholder farmers</td>
<td>- Extension focus on maximising yields rather than farmer income/profits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Knowledge institutes (Universities, ATVET and research organisations) well established</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Agriculture considered a stable fall-back option for urban youth</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Examples of effective commercial cluster development making effective use of extension</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Effective farm led and model farmer extension models available for wider application and further refinement special target groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- On and off-farm unemployment among youth, recognised by government</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- New forms of knowledge sharing, joint purchase of input and bulking among equals (women groups, youth groups, farmer associations) become more popular (Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities:</td>
<td>Threats:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Limited operational space for CSO’s may be changing (Ethiopia)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- CSOs in a new role as neutral convenor in linking farmers (or their organisations) to public/private initiatives for improved market access</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Resource constraints can partially be lifted by collaboration between public and private sectors in knowledge transfer (PPP). Examples: growing private training providers, and VC embedded extension services.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Stronger links between private sector and public sector ensure better alignment with labour market</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Phenomenal growth in the use of mobile technologies offers potential for improved farmer access to extension and market information</td>
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<tr>
<td>- More attention to post-harvest losses creates off-farm employment opportunities for youth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- CEA partner experiences in off-farm employment creation such as Job booster (Benin, Ethiopia, Kenya)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Decentralisation and devolution policies create opportunities for contextualising of knowledge and skills service delivery (Kenya)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ineffective service delivery as different programmes and institutions work in parallel on capacity building and knowledge transfer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Under-resourced ATVET institutions or initiatives and extension agents.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Large flagship programmes, often combining input supplies with training and extension, risk overstretching demands on DAs (Ethiopia).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Increased temperature extremes and unreliable rainfall patterns affect risk profile of farmers and their food and nutrition insecurity as a result. Extra strong factor for youth.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Poor cascading of policies to county level: i.e. inadequate implementation at county level of in principle adequate policies, due to capacity constraints, limited resources and poor governance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Growing land scarcity, and uncertainty about ownership threatens investment levels in improved inputs and sustainability (e.g. erosion control)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Risk of divide between high quality private service delivery to ‘stepping up’ (emerging) farmers offering good connections to markets and value chains, and poor-quality public services for other farmers (‘hanging in’) offering less connection to markets and jobs (Kenya)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Reluctant attitude and biased mindset among rural youth towards agricultural production as a livelihood</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Combining skills development with employment generation (direct link to job market) is less obvious in (commercial) agriculture than in industry.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Based on the SWOT analysis and making use of the contextualised farmer typology, a research agenda can be developed with a higher level of action orientation and ownership by the stakeholders. A relevant example is the issue of planned import restrictions on foreign barley and related price levels in Ethiopia. The dialogue tables and proposed skills platforms in several countries are commendable in this light as they offer a useful multi-stakeholder approach at the regional level with linkages (and thus feedback loops) to both local and national level actors. As these platforms are still at an early stage of development, their effectiveness as part of a country level L&A strategy is yet to be established. The approach and its potential for knowledge and learning within the larger system are certainly of interest.

Adopting such a learning approach, and engaging in joint action learning and probing, contributes to a growing level of trust and openness among stakeholders. While starting from an advisory role, using evidence-based constructive dialogue methods, a gradual shift towards a more value-based lobby could evolve. (see Fig. 7) This would not only contribute to the quality of interactions among stakeholders, it could also open up possibilities to address more value-laden issues related to norms and values such as women and youth access rights. In fact, such a shift might prove to be required in pursuing an agenda for specific target groups and could thus be actively pursued.

**Action learning practices and the role of the neutral convener**

Besides the commissioning of research, as is current practice, the application of action learning practices by actors of these dialogue tables could add value to these platforms in dealing with complex system changes. Using action learning tools to develop a portfolio of diverse ‘safe to fail’ probes could prove a suitable strategy to generate evidence-based recommendations for systemic changes to be taken up in lobby and advocacy at higher administrative levels. The aim of these portfolios of experiments is to create a variety of options to be explored that were not available before. An adequate portfolio of ‘safe to fail’ probes is necessary, and some failure should be expected and even encouraged, as it allows people to try new things (Cunningham, 2016).

Adopting such an ongoing action learning approach in a multi-stakeholder setting has implications for the role of CSOs as a neutral convener. As shown in table 4, the approach to change in complex situations requires close monitoring of these experiments and using feedback to interpret emerging practices and act upon them. Properly facilitated, the multi-stakeholder platforms can offer dialogue space to stakeholders and VC actors in which feedback is shared and reflected upon. To play the neutral convener

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7 The specification of the country level L&A strategy remains generic in most if not all case study countries. In annex 1 we provide a first tentative compilation of L&A strategy elements for the four country cases. No target group specific L&A strategies have been developed.

8 As it cannot be determined what works in advance, these experiments need to be ‘safe to fail’, meaning that if they fail they should not threaten the overall change initiative or lead to individuals or organisations losing face.
or facilitator role, the CSO partner must be trusted as a reliable party, acting in a transparent manner and capable of linking field practice with strategic vision. In other words, the facilitator role requires recognition and a degree of authority from the stakeholders. Given the local partners capacity development objectives such a neutral convenor role would require specific attention in developing competencies and leadership qualities for which peer to peer learning and coaching could be considered.

Assess how CEA partners facilitate, support and function in establishing such MSPs, realising that key success factors for effective MSPs are:
- win-win situations for all participants or those they represent
- goal alignment
- flexibility and adaptability
- transparency and trust
- acceptance of leadership by private sector actors
- knowledge and information sharing

MSPs are institutionalised in the cashew sector in Benin (the ‘inter-profession’) and skills platforms are being initiated in Uganda and Kenya. Analysing and documenting this process, and a willingness to probe approaches and tools, could offer valuable insights in and strengthen the Neutral Convener role and its wider application.

Peer to peer learning is a familiar practice according to the learning workshop reports, and partners in the alliance seem aware of their complementary strengths. Yet networked learning could be more effectively used in the partnership approach e.g. to strengthen local-national linkages and establish and maintain wider network connections with major stakeholders. So far, the CEA partners seem to make only sporadic use of their network connections and alliances of likeminded organisations. Diversity also plays a role in the network interactions. A more strategic use of network linkages might be called for without losing sight of the required transparency in decision making. Building new network linkages and strategic partnerships is a challenging task for small CSOs that have little margin to invest time and energies in longer term collaboration. As the example of the strategic partnership with MFA shows, policy priorities and time constraints affect collaboration with EKN. Specific initiatives in which collaboration adds value can be productive – as was demonstrated by a joint conference in Uganda on improved seeds. At the same time, we should keep our expectations realistic as the level of participation and initiative in consultative processes heavily depends on staff capacity and time.

To make sense of how a complex system works is to continuously interact with it by exploring different avenues, to learn based on feedback received, and to adapt one’s strategy. If patterns are observed that are perceived to be positive, one can act to amplify these patterns. If patterns emerge that are perceived to be negative, one responds by dampening these patterns (Cunningham, 2016).

4 Conclusions for CEA’s Strategic Partnership programme

We set ourselves the aim to explore how a livelihoods-based farmer typology could contribute to more inclusive market development. Having looked at both the literature and practice in four country case studies, what conclusions can we draw?

A livelihoods perspective for more inclusive agricultural transformation

Smallholders are not a homogeneous group, and development policies should not treat them as such. The use of specific target groups, following the typology of ‘stepping out’, ‘hanging in’ and ‘stepping up’ can help in identifying specific intervention strategies, particularly in relation to larger rural transition processes in geographical areas.

- The typology requires local contextualisation and in doing so, offers a useful framework that facilitates communication and assists in building a shared understanding of livelihood strategies of poor people.
- Effective targeting requires an assessment of how farmers, women, youth and persons living with disabilities relate to the farmer typology, and how changes pertain to their roles and position in the transition process.
• Linking local livelihood strategies with regional and (inter)national developments and transitions, the use of the farmer typology contributes to:
  • a deeper understanding of intervention options and choices to be made in terms of prioritising lobby and advocacy initiatives.
  • an overarching narrative of inclusive development in rural transition processes and could help to relate the various country programmes to each other for comparison and mutual learning.
• For the L&A to be geared to system changes, a greater awareness of the larger system and its interrelations is required. Contextualisation of TOCs at policy goal level (e.g. by country-VC-target group combination) would help increase such awareness.

Rather than assuming a generic change in role division and adopting generic approaches to address these specific target groups, evidence-based L&A is required. Research is needed to identify context-specific challenges and opportunities for sub-groups and what implications these have for the goals and objectives of L&A by civil society actors in CEA. A distinction will need to be made between the sphere of control (actions and outputs of partners), the sphere of influence (partners able to influence specific envisaged outcomes and changes) and the sphere of interest (no influence but impacting on the target audiences).

For example, we looked specifically at the targeting of young people (men and women) as several of the country case studies showed strong tendencies to a diversification of both on and off farm livelihood strategies. Better access to information, higher levels of education, and higher life expectations and aspirations were found to contribute to rural urban migration (both seasonal and as part of their life cycle). As a result, the ageing rural population with increased numbers of female headed households develops a variety of income streams, with changing role divisions and gender relations. This realisation also supports the view on farmers as agents who make active choices in the face of uncertainties, using his/her knowledge base and culture. Using the farmer typology for analysing the underlying livelihood strategies clarifies how considerations of uncertainty and risk management are addressed and could be strengthened through FOs, extension support or through L&A.

Having demonstrated the relevance and use of a livelihoods-based farmer typology and adopting a systems perspective to rural transitions, the CEA country programmes can use the typology in developing a shared understanding of livelihood strategies of male and female farmers and youth in their efforts to address and shape rural transitions. This will also allow development of more differentiated intervention and related L&A strategies. Selecting the geographic area to work in, one can either seek complementarity, work in parallel or adopt an innovation role towards the Dutch country programme.

A Networked approach to learning
Applying the farmer typology in relation to knowledge, training and education we concluded that:

• The coherence in institutions supporting formal and informal learning, both public and private is a major challenge and requires a stronger coordinating role of government in setting standards and regulate access.

• Developing a deeper understanding on the ‘demand side’ of the training and education market place is a major benefit that can be used to develop a livelihoods approach to ATVET with:
  • For stepping out farmers, off-farm skills development can be a suitable intervention which can help in escaping poverty but does not exclude agriculture as this is often used as a fall-back option.
  • Attention to informal and inter-generational learning capabilities regarding both on and off-farm relevant skills and competences.
  • Taking learning capacities of farmers, youth and women seriously, training should aim to build on rather than replace existing knowledge. This often means a stronger emphasis on life skills, soft
skills and business development competencies instead of the traditional focus on technical crop production issues.

Addressing such issues of skills mismatch through facilitated network learning opportunities, including internships, action research and dialogue platforms could offer a worthwhile area for Edukans and the CEA alliance to add value by developing network connections and creating diverse opportunities for learning by doing. (see also par. 4.1.1)

Extension, to support informal learning and training is most effective in combination with VC development and can take various forms. From VC embedded services in commercial cluster developments, to farmer field schools and as a farmer to farmer learning and sharing intervention. Based on systems-based concepts of networked learning in action, we argue for a stronger experimental or probing practice in the MSP fora such as dialogue tables and skills platforms.

- Such probing and action learning could offer evidence-based examples of innovations to be used in L&A for higher level system change and could prove to offer a specific role for CSOs as neutral convenors. Such a role would also allow some more (sector) political room for manoeuvring in times when the operational space for CSO’s in general is under pressure.

4.1 Thematic areas for development

In this last paragraph, we highlight some issues which emerged from the case studies that deserve further analysis and development. Some of the issues lend themselves to further action research and probing in ways that are ‘safe to fail’, others deserve further study as part of the evidence gathering for the L&A initiatives.

4.1.1 Skills development & access to knowledge

Research showed that a combination of different extension and skills development services that complement each other yields the best results. In interviews for this study, resource persons stressed the need to distinguish between and cater for different types of skills, i.e. technological skills, business skills and ‘soft’ (social and personal) skills. It is important to select a good blend of methods of knowledge transfer and skills development that fit the social setting and context. The packaging of extension messages and skills development provision must be sensitive to community practices and beliefs for ease of adoption and uptake.

The formal training sector in higher education and ATVET is ill-adapted to the labour market requirements. Public TVET institutions should build and strengthen linkages with industry stakeholders. Engagement and support of private sector actors in knowledge transfer and skills development should be further promoted, particularly in the ‘dynamic’ areas. Curricula, training and extension services need to be better embedded in the dynamics of present-day agricultural value chains, with a more prominent place for market-oriented business skills and personal skills alongside the more traditional technical and farm management skills.

As we have seen some initiatives to improve on the AKIS connections and linkages, the CEA programme could explore and probe some mechanisms of practical knowledge sharing: student internships with companies, extension services and training providers; publishing farmer profiles and their success stories, lessons learnt (in Uganda, some worthwhile initiatives were undertaken to communicate through press and national television).

A different yet related issue is to explore with (regional) TVET institutions the training and education implications of young people’s mixed livelihood strategies including both on and off farm occupations. The need to support resilience in the face of growing uncertainties would make an argument to maintain the knowledge base on agriculture and food production as it is seen as fall-back option.

4.1.2 Dimensions of risk control and risk management by smallholder farmers

As for any entrepreneur, risk management is a key challenge for farmers and especially so for smallholders, as they have limited options for controlling risk factors or mitigating the risks. Smallholder farmers tend to be constrained in investing in risk mitigation not only because of limited household resources or lack of access to finance, but also lack of knowledge and information play a role. They may not be aware or knowledgeable about the challenges and the nature of risks they are likely to face. One relatively new area where risk management plays a prominent role include climate change adaptation.
***Climate Change:***

Distinctive but as yet unpredictable changes in weather patterns due to climate change affect peoples’ lives and have a major impact on agricultural production and the larger transition process. This increases agricultural risks, creates uncertainty, and influences production and farmers’ incomes. Climate change adaptation and mitigation of related risks feature high on policy agendas but have often not yet been translated into local level policy initiatives (like local government budgets) or earmarked investments in context-specific knowledge and skills development services delivery.

Ideally, knowledge transfer systems and skills development initiatives would need to integrate notions of risk control and mitigation into their service delivery in order to strengthen resilience of farmers. Extension workers can help farmers to improve their risk management skills, to recognise and understand the challenges and to make better farm management decisions to mitigate risks.

**Diversification as a farm-level risk management strategy:** Diversification improves economic stability by reducing financial risk, stabilising farm income, and increasing choice of farm practices. Crop diversification has impacts on two outcomes of climate-smart agriculture: increased productivity and enhanced resilience (household income, food security, and nutrition). It depends, however, on there being opportunities for diversification and on farmers’ knowledge and responsiveness to those opportunities.
References


Abbreviations

AFDB  African Development Bank
ASSP  Agricultural Sector Strategic Plan
ATVET  Agricultural Technical and Vocational Education and Training
BTVET  Business Technical and Vocational Education and Training
CAAAP  Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CEA  Civic Engagement Alliance
CNDPF  Comprehensive National Development Planning Framework
CPI  Country Plan of Implementation
CSO  Civil Society Organisation
DA  Development Agent
DFID  Directorate for International Development
DGIS  Directorate General for International Cooperation
DRC  Democratic Republic of Congo
EKN  Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
EPRA  Extended Participatory Rural Appraisal
FAO  Food and Agricultural Organisation
FNS  Food and Nutrition Security
FTC  Farmer Training Center
FFS  Farmer Field School
GDP  Gross Domestic Product
GoU  Government of Uganda
HE  Higher Education
HERQAA  Higher Education Relevance and Quality Assurance Agency
ICCO  Inter-church Organisation for Development Co-operation
IoB  Inspectie Ontwikkelingssamenwerking en Beleidsevaluatie (Dutch: Policy and Operations)
L&A  Lobby and advocacy
LIC  Low Income Country
LMIC  Low Middle Income Country
MAAIF  Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries
MASP  Multi Annual Strategic Plan
MFA  Ministry of Foreign Affairs
M4P  Markets for the Poor
MoE  Ministry of Education
NAADS  National Agricultural Advisory Services
NFP  Netherlands Fellowship Programmes
NICHE  Netherlands Initiative for Capacity-development in Higher Education
NODIPU  National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda
NUSA F  Northern Uganda Social action Fund
NWO  Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek (Dutch Research Council)
OKP  Orange Knowledge Programme
PO  Producer Organisation
PoC  Pathways of Change
PWD  People with Disabilities
PWG  Permanent Working Group
RVO  Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland (Netherlands Enterprise Agency)
SPC&C  Strategic Partnership Convening and Convincing
TVET  Technical and Vocational Education and Training
VC  Value Chain
WASH  Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
Annex 1 Design issues in Agricultural Extension interventions

Programme design lessons for inclusive agricultural development

A number of useful lessons and refinements in the extension models and practices that came up in literature and the quick scans which we think are worth mentioning here:

- Extension programmes, even when targeting poorer farmers and female farmers explicitly, are not always successful in reaching them. Participatory extension practices have not delivered one clear-cut ‘best practice’ to be brought to scale. The Ethiopian and Kenyan examples demonstrate that a variety of methods and models, from model farmers to out-growers or FFS through producer organisations, can be applied depending on the local context. Farmer-to-farmer extension approaches, preferably in combination with value chain development interventions, have the best track record in including smallholder farmers (IoB, 2017).

- Value chain approaches, especially when part of a private company-led out-growers or contract farmers’ scheme, tend to be biased towards larger and more prosperous farmers. There is a stronger emphasis on public goals, including equity, in so-called integrated approaches combining market development with a livelihood’s perspective.

- Smallholder farmers tend to benefit more from VC development when dealing with regional markets regarding staple food crops. International VC development and their requirements such as certification tend to be more beneficial to medium-sized farms. For poorer smallholders, the cost involved in certification and organisation, both in terms of money and time, tend to outweigh the value increase.

- Maintaining linkages between farmers and the rest of the value chain strongly depends on capacity development and empowerment of actors, and particularly the farmers.

- Key to success is the quality and commitment of extension staff. Often their working conditions are severely limited by operational means, gaps in their professional training and frequent transfers.

- The power of sharing existing farmer’s knowledge (peer to peer and intergenerational) is underestimated and requires more appreciation in both formal and informal learning programmes.

- Social and business skills deserve more attention but are often lacking in extension staff training.

- Women, youth and PWD, elderly farmers (because of urban migration) require specific approaches, based on a thorough understanding of their livelihood practices.

- Farming system development in more dynamic settings requires a geographical approach working in clusters to bring VC actors together. Network linkages (read: multi-stakeholder platforms and processes) with research, private actors, civil society organisations and (local) government are crucial to successful transformation.

- Rather than to aim for increases in production, attention is to focus on increased income. For example, all four case studies indicated the importance of skills development for better post-harvest handling.
Annex 2 Constructive Dialogues in a multi-stakeholder setting

The following table provides an overview of the L&A strategies in the four case study countries, using the 10 steps framework of the CEA alliance. The table is based on the country programme documents and the learning and reflection workshop reports. Given the limited scope of this study, this overview is work in progress and would require further validation and possibly expansion by the CEA country teams, paying specific attention to a refinement and contextualisation of policy agendas and L&A plans (using the suggested typology and target-group specification).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP</th>
<th>Kenya</th>
<th>Ethiopia</th>
<th>Uganda</th>
<th>Benin</th>
<th>Observations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. clarify the objectives of your organisation, network or program coalition</td>
<td>Overall ToC guiding – contextualisation missing?</td>
<td>Overall ToC guiding – building on and reinforcing existing STARS project and using its context</td>
<td>Overall ToC guiding</td>
<td>Overall ToC guiding</td>
<td>In almost all cases specification of goals viz-a-viz access of target audiences to knowledge, extension and training is poorly developed – no sub-sector (access / transfer knowledge) or target specific contextualisation of ToCs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. define your target group</td>
<td>Smallholder emergent farmers in specific VCs in Western Kenya</td>
<td>Small scale farmers in barley &amp; potato VC</td>
<td>Smallholder farmers in specific VC in 3 provinces Northern Uganda</td>
<td>Two very different target groups</td>
<td>Interaction through PO/CBO/Church membership? Not specified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. choose your advocacy goal and set objective(s)</td>
<td>Conducive business environment, CD of policy and decision makers, MSPs for inclusive VCD; Strong partner in Youth focus is an asset</td>
<td>Access over productive resources, inclusive international trade &amp; investment regime, Full inclusion of women, youth and PWD in VC</td>
<td>Improving access to markets, Capacity development of CSO/CBO/FBO in L&amp;A</td>
<td>Strong on inclusive VCD in 2 very different chains</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. identify stakeholders</td>
<td>County governments mainly, But also some national foci, Private service providers</td>
<td>Local Govt, Model farmers, Farmer orgs, VC actors and private sector (Heineken)</td>
<td>Community, Government, VC actors</td>
<td>Private sector for cashews as public sector lacks expertise and knowledge (but recognition of Shea sector is growing lately), Relatively more on public sector for cashews</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. define the decision-makers</td>
<td>County level officials, National decision makers on trade &amp; investment</td>
<td>Government, Not so clear at what level</td>
<td>Local / county level government?</td>
<td>Not always clear—often more focus on praxis in VC less on policy development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. prepare your organisation, network, coalition for lobby and advocacy</td>
<td>Capacity development for CS but also public sector, Mixed partners – AYT stands out for expertise and focus on youth</td>
<td>Add on activity, concerns on time requirements, Org. geared towards implementation, Network alliances identified</td>
<td>Some L&amp;A experience among partners, Coaching and support required, Network of likeminded faith based CSOs</td>
<td>Mixed partnership, Some strong partners (PASCIB for L&amp;A pw 1) and AKIB (umbrella org. in Shea), CSO (Dedras)</td>
<td>Mostly CDS instrumental – not strategic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. check is L&amp;A the right instrument</td>
<td>By design – yes</td>
<td>By design – yes</td>
<td>By design – yes</td>
<td>By design</td>
<td>Focus on hard skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. develop a lobby and advocacy action plan</td>
<td>Available docs do not show comprehensive integrated approach</td>
<td>Available docs do not show a comprehensive integrated approach</td>
<td>Available docs do not show a comprehensive integr. approach</td>
<td>Available docs do not show comprehensive integrated approach</td>
<td>How does dialogue tables compare to VC development interventions?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Annex 3 Opportunities for differentiated training and extension strategy for inclusive market development

The table is work in progress based on the contextualised farmer typology for malt barley farming system in the highlands of Ethiopia (see table 2 p.12)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farmer Typology</th>
<th>Target group</th>
<th>Content focus</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Network</th>
<th>Lobby &amp; Advocacy</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Stepping Up     | Model farmers | • Farmer to farmer extension methods incl. demo plots  
• Market information  
• Input supply  
• Post-harvest quality  
• Formal training and contract | Formal contract with Public Private Partnership incl. Heineken & ATA) with structured training programme | • Regional Universities,  
• Agricultural research stations | Import policy malt barley to stimulate national production (Nat. level)  
Farmer representation in price setting committees | Model farmers gain status and (political) influence through their position |
|                 | Selected Male headed farm household with .3 ha of land | Field & Training sessions on malt barley production according to farm season (pre-planting, crop management and quality management post-harvest) | Model farmers and Farmer association (informal)  
Farmer organisations (formal) | • Peer to peer among farmers in association  
• Model farmer, regular contact in demo plots | | Value chain embedded and crop specific extension, linked to input supply and a guaranteed market |
| Hanging In      | Female headed households with <2ha land | Food and subsistence crops for regional markets: input supply and production methods  
Potential:  
• Value adding methods  
• Market information  
• Child care | Nat. extension service | Local community | Local & regional issues dialogue tables with VC actors | ATVET education promoted partly as a way to raise the first child bearing age |
|                 | Young people with:  
• unclear land use rights  
• waiting to take over the farm from aging parent  
• in between off farm occupations  
• seasonal farm occupation | Food and subsistence crops for regional markets: input supply and production methods  
Potential:  
• Value adding &  
• Market information  
• Business development  
• Social & Life skills | Nat. extension service or farmer association  
Potential:  
• Internships  
• Demonstration farms  
• ATVET education | Urban linkages, through education and media access | | Agriculture often seen as fall back option in view of traditional land ownership claims.  
Training requires stronger coordination between (A)TVET and extension service provider |
| Stepping Out    | Elderly male | ??  
Potential:  
• Life skills  
• Negotiation and social skills  
• Technical vocational skills | Currently not available (?) | Urban linkages, through education, family linkages and media access | Access to education | Often related to urban migration or regional employment with value chain actors |
| Young people | TVET education Potential with • Practical training • Internships • Specific technical training | Commerce and private companies A role for CSO’s in providing lifeskills? |