



CEED is helping to operationalize the NAADS' vision of demand-driven development in a way that enhances income while protecting the natural resource base upon which livelihoods in Kabale District depend.

A Coalition for Enabling Demand-Driven Development in Kabale District, Uganda

One of the envisioned outcomes of more participatory, demand-driven agricultural development is direct input from farmers into policy formulation and service provision. This represents a significant challenge not only from the standpoint of organizing farmers and civil society to articulate desired development pathways given a long history of top-down approaches to development, but also from the standpoint of policy makers and service

ized, farmer-owned and private sector-serviced extension system that contributes to the PMA vision of a more market-oriented, specialized and privatized agricultural sector. Principles intended to guide the implementation of NAADS include sustainable natural resource management, pro-poor and gender sensitive development, market-oriented production and farmer empowerment (NAADS, 2000). The challenges posed by such a program are significant.

The CEED Coalition works to enable demand-driven development and operationalize the NAADS vision in Kabale District, Uganda.

Hot Spot	Dimensions of the Problem
<i>Agroenterprise selection/dev't.</i>	Time is too short to address complex selection criteria (sustainability, equity, profitability, capital); the principle of enterprise specialization is questioned.
<i>Roles & responsibilities</i>	Ambiguity of roles and responsibilities in NAADS implementation manual and absence of clear checks and balances in operations contribute to abuse of funds and usurpation of decision-making authority.
<i>Funding & financial accountability</i>	Capital for inputs does not accompany service provision; disbursement not synchronous with agricultural cycle; inequitable distribution (flat allocation irrespective of sub-county population, funds insufficient for full coverage); fund allocation is not transparent or participatory at the sub-county level.
<i>Inclusiveness & empowerment</i>	Farmer fora are not considered representative; equity is not considered in agroenterprise selection or program design; farmer capacity to effect change & awareness of legal basis for empowerment is still lacking.
<i>Service delivery</i>	Insufficient quality of service providers; required qualifications (diploma) limit use of local experts; coverage is biased toward more accessible villages & farms; farmers lack control over contracting; monitoring of services is ineffective.

Table 1. Concerns Expressed by Farmers and Other NAADS Stakeholders in the Pilot Phase

providers themselves—in enhancing their responsiveness to civil society. In southwestern Uganda, a coalition of research and development organizations is working to operationalize principles of grassroots empowerment and equity under a national program to decentralize agricultural services—the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS).

NAADS

NAADS, first implemented in 2002 in a series of pilot sites, falls under Uganda's Plan for the Modernization of Agriculture (PMA). NAADS' vision entails a decentral-

Pressure by donors and new districts to roll out the program quickly has also limited the extent to which experiences in pilot districts can inform the implementation process in new sites.

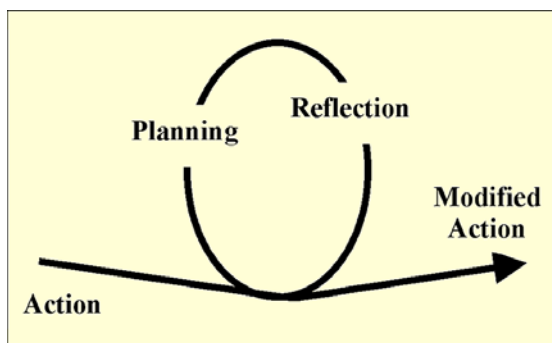
During the pilot phase, sub-counties were asked to select NGOs to assist in sensitizing about NAADS, in group registration, and in agroenterprise selection. When this process came to an end, contracted organizations felt the process had created more questions than answers. Farmers voiced concern over the need to prioritize single enterprises given the complexity of their farming systems and production goals, while NGOs

were concerned about lack of clarity on how to integrate “cross-cutting principles” (gender, equity, sustainability) and ensure farmer representation. A district-level dialogue among research and development organizations emerged from such concerns, and crystallized into the Coalition for Effective Extension Delivery (CEED)—an initiative to enable demand-driven agricultural development in the District.

Organizing for the Demand Side: Action Research Committees and the CEED Coalition

CEED’s aim is to enable demand-driven development in Kabale District, and to derive broader principles from these experiences for subsequent dissemination to other development actors. The first activity carried out by the Coalition was to identify key concerns of farmers and other NAADS stakeholders during the pilot phase. Results of interviews are summarized in Table 1.

The second step (ongoing) has been to employ a Participatory Action Learning (PAL) process at the sub-county level to work through the bottlenecks hindering effective realization of demand-driven service provision. This process may be described as an iterative series of action learning loops in which discrete steps (action→reflection→re-planning→modified action) enable actors to learn through experience (Box 1). For this purpose, a parish-level council composed of represen-



Box 1: Participatory Action Learning Loop (Hagmann, pers. comm.)

tatives of farmer groups in each village was formed. It is designed to link these grassroots groups with the farmer fora—the organizational unit proscribed by NAADS to represent farmers’ interests. The independence of this group from the farmer fora enables it to serve the critical function of ensuring effective representation and accountability within the farmer fora as this fledgling structure takes root in Ugandan policy.

Although preliminary areas of action have been aimed at increasing transparency and accountability at the sub-county level, future activities include areas of involvement closer to AHI’s core research and development agenda (sustainable livelihoods). Action research on approaches to agroenterprise selection and development that optimize diverse goals (short- and long-term, income, food security), build upon local knowledge and enhance equity and sustainability, as well as on alternative service providers (farmers, private sector), will become part of the core mandate.

Successes and Challenges

Some of the key successes and challenges are outlined below, and serve as the basis for ongoing learning as CEED works to enhance farmer-owned development processes in Kabale District and beyond.

Successes

- ✓ Farmers clearly identify constraints to local empowerment, are engaged in the PAL process and in seeking solutions, and advocate directly with NAADS actors at sub-county and national levels, both through and independent from CEED.
- ✓ The NAADS Secretariat is open to restructuring not only implementation procedures, but even policy guidelines when a strong case is made from the grassroots level.

Challenges

- ✓ CEED has struggled with the challenge of summarizing results quickly, so as to influence policies implemented during program expansion.
- ✓ The tendency for farmers to see the PAL process as external to the NAADS framework has made its legitimacy and full participation a challenge.
- ✓ Maintaining broad support at the sub-county level has been difficult, given the efforts of vested interests to de-legitimize the PAL process.

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