Development and Lessons Learned from a Bean Innovation Platform in Uganda

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Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Collaborative Research on Grain Legumes

**Project Goals**

- Identify strategies to *increase productivity* of common beans in farmers’ cropping systems
- Identify management practices and technologies to *improve soil fertility*
- *Enhance farmers’ capabilities* in diagnosing and finding solutions, and identify solutions to *sustainably implementing* them
Farmers’ Goals

• Improve Household Food and Nutrition Security (‘escape’ poverty and hunger)

• Address Problems of ‘Exhausted’ Soils

• Increase Production

• Income – Increase and More Reliable
**IP Background & Motivation**

- **Known Value of Farmer Associations/Coops**
  - Previous CRSP Project (ag. value chain w/ nutrition)
  - Agricultural Extension project experience
  - CGIAR Challenge Programme, African Great Lakes
  - APEP (USAID Ag. Prod. Enhancement Program)

- **Farmers’ Motivations** *(previous slide)*

- **Need to Engage Stakeholders in Value Chain**
  - Overcome negative attitudes
  - Build trusting business relationships
**Evolution and Development**

- **Realization of Constraints and Needs**
  - Participatory Rural Appraisal & Baseline HH Survey
  - Consultative Planning

- **Research Activities**
  - Multiple Trainings
  - Field Trials, Demonstrations, & Field Days

- **Beyond Research Activities**
  - Need for quality seed
  - Need for credit
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**Impacts - Farmers**

- **Knowledge Gains**
  - Founded on Local/Indigenous Knowledge vis. farming systems and environment
  - Trainings (management practices & technologies, economics of farming as a business)
  - Communication networks (*horizontal & vertical*)

- **Collective Action**
  - Access Inputs
  - Credit
  - Markets
Impacts – Private Sector

• Access to New Markets for Goods
  – Inputs (fertilizers, pesticides, etc.)
  – Produce (bean seed)
  – Seed multiplication via contract farming
  – Working capital from foreign private bank

• Access to New Markets for Services
  – Additional microcredit loan clients
  – Accurate data for future loan pre-assessment
Innovative Partnerships

- **Public-Public**
  - Masaka & Rakai Districts (Agric. Prod. & Extension)
  - Makerere University and NARL
  - U.S. Universities (Iowa State, Hawai`i, Michigan St.)

- **Private-Private**
  - CEDO (seed production)
  - MAMIDECOT (microfinance)
  - Bukoola Agro-chemicals
  - Input Supply Retailers

- **Public-Private** *(per above)*
**Enhanced through New Partners**

- Solar Now irrigation (MAMIDECOT = agent)
- Flying Foods (commercial production of crickets for food/flour)
- Operation Wealth Creation (Govt. of Uganda)
- Youth Livelihoods Project (USAID)
Sustainability

- Communication, social learning, collective action
- Training materials (printed and animated videos)
- Progressive farmers training others
- Farmers initiate field trials and field days
- Soil testing services integrated in local gov’t plan
- Farmers (900+), seed producer, agro-input dealers, microfinance org., traders, extension agents
- IP currently developing its own 3-year strategic plan
Replication and Scaling Up

- Understand knowledge, attitudes and practices underlying local farming systems
- Focus on addressing farmers’ priority needs
- Early engagement of private sector businesses
- Local trials of mgmt. practices/technologies
- Utilize and build on local resources/institutions
- Environment of inclusive communication and mutual learning involving every participant
Lessons & Recommendations

• Provide early trainings about concept and dimensions of IP formation and operation

• *Broaden awareness and adoption* of new management practices and technologies beyond those with pre-existing economic ability to take risks and invest

• IP must be *flexible, iterative, responsive* to diverse set of stakeholders’ needs – be *inclusive*

• Identify and train *local* partners to take *ownership* of the IP, *mobilize* farmers and *connect* to various IP levels