The FANRPAN/CTA web publishing and electronic networks course was held from 5-16 November, 2001 in Harare. The Technical Centre for Agriculture and Rural Co-operation (CTA) was created in 1983 under the Lomé Convention between the ACP Group (African, Caribbean, Pacific countries) and the European Union. The Centre continues its activities under the Cotonou Agreement, the successor of the Lomé convention.

A major part of the Centre’s work is in strengthening the information and communication management capacities of ACP organisations involved in agricultural development.

The Centre has the following programmes:

- Information products and services
- Communication channels and services
- Capacity building in Information Communication Management (ICM)

Mr Kevin Painting, representing CTA at the official opening of the course explained that his institution had organized 30 such workshops in 2001, in subjects such as management information systems, public speaking, scientific writing, annual report writing, project proposal writing and the management of networks.

The FANRPAN/CTA regional workshop had participants from agricultural institutions in Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The training was delivered by Mr Justin Chisenga and Mr Enock Yonazi, regional experts from South Africa and Tanzania.

Mr Painting thanked the collaborating partner, i.e. FANRPAN for making available all the resources to assure the success of the workshop.

Mr Painting also congratulated the experts, Mr Justin Chisenga and Mr Enock Yonazi for the enthusiasm and quality of their preparatory work for the workshop.

“To conclude, I invite you to take the best advantage of this workshop, to strengthen and realise your potential and to raise the profile and excellence of your institutions through this exciting communication medium,” Mr Painting said.

The guest of honour at the workshop opening was Professor Ostin Chivinge, Dean of Agriculture at the University of Zimbabwe. Professor Chivinge spoke on the relationship CTA had with the Faculty of Agriculture, which dated back for many years when CTA funded FANRPAN workshops, stakeholder consultations and web site development. “This relationship has grown over years and...
Creating Partnerships between business, government and civil society for poverty alleviation among rural communities in Zambia

By the Partnership Forum

The FANRPAN network believes that in order to eradicate poverty in the SADC region, creative partnerships need to be forged by different agencies. The Partnership Forum created one such alliance in Zambia. This involves some members of the FANRPAN node at the University of Zambia. The following is a brief written by the Assistant Dean of the University of Zambia, on how the coalition was created.

For a long time, household and national food security have been talked about so much and yet the reality is that we have so far not achieved these intended goals. It is becoming more and more evident that many of the development strategies that have so far been employed by NGOs, donor community and government are not leading to poverty eradication and sustainable livelihoods.

Official and independent literature describes Zambia as facing a serious poverty crisis with more than 83% of its people living in abject poverty. To us in the Partnership Forum, poverty means that people have little or no access to decent and sufficient supply of clean water, education, health, food and shelter.

In the face of failing strategies in poverty eradication, it has become imperative to come up with new initiatives that can give hope and reduce poverty. The concept of partnership with those that are perceived as "unusual partners" such as business organizations is being pursued to address abject poverty. Business, the world over, in spite of their iniquities, has proven their capacity to create wealth. Without talking about the issues of distribution, many people acknowledge the fact that in our human quest to eradicate poverty, it is absolutely necessary that wealth be created in the first instance.

Considering the distinctive competencies that each of the three sectors (government, private sector and NGOs) have acquired and managed, it is reasonable to state that if these sectors worked more synergistically, they would more effectively and efficiently realize their common goals as well as their particular core interests. It is this synergy that will link community economic activities with the mainstream economy through strategic alliances with business and government that will open up new windows of opportunities for development.

Enter the Luangeni Partnership

It is in this context that the Partnership Forum was formed in 1999 in Zambia. This is a unique example that partnering with "unusual partners" as noted earlier, is indeed the way to address poverty reduction initiatives. The partnership involved Shoprite (a...
Creating Partnerships (cont’d)

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regional grocery store conglomerate), Zanseed (Zambian Seed Producing Company), Eastern Province Chamber of Commerce, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, World Vision and other grassroots institutions to empower one rural community in the Eastern part of Zambia called Luangeni. The aim of this partnership was to enable the community to grow quality horticultural products for which Shoprite would provide a ready market. Previously, Shoprite transported vegetables from Lusaka, 600 kilometres away and sometimes even from South Africa, the headquarters of Shoprite.

The poverty level in Luangeni Village, like in most other villages in Zambia, is very deep and evident throughout the community. Out of the 80 children met during the research, only 20% were in school. Most parents were aware of the importance of education to their children but they had no resources to pay the school fees. Out of 150 adults between the ages of 20-65, only 28% had attended primary school whilst only 5% had attended junior secondary school.

With regard to health, most of the people of Luangeni survive on traditional medicines and herbs. Should there be any complicated cases, people wait for “nature to take its course.” Out of the 135 households interviewed, 89% were unable to pay the K4,000 (US$1) user fee demanded by the nearest health center.

In terms of food security, the Luangeni community was found to be prone to perennial hunger because their food production levels did not meet their consumption requirements. In addition, they did not have enough income to enable them to purchase food.

The Luangeni community had worked with a number of NGOs in various aspects of development. The view of the Partnership Forum is that while the interventions from various NGOs have been worthwhile, the fact that these interventions have not linked the community to the mainstream economy means that the interventions have not been sustainable and people cannot “earn a living” out of them.

Given this development, the partnership that has been created in Luangeni has the following objectives:

- To facilitate the increase in the capacity of the Luangeni community to produce on a monthly basis at least 2.4 tonnes of tomatoes, 4.0 tonnes of cabbages, 2.0 tonnes of onions, 0.4 tonnes of okra of acceptable quality to Chipata Shoprite Store.
- To promote the forging of viable economic links between Shoprite and the Luangeni community through regular discussions on new opportunities for increased business volume and ensuring that all the produce by the Luangeni community is absorbed by Shoprite both locally and to other outlets outside Chipata.
- To facilitate the enhancement of the ability of at least 60 households in Luangeni village to increase their earnings from the current K43,000 (US$14) per annum to K150,000 (US$50) per month by the end of 2001.
- To facilitate increased access to health services of at least 60 households in the Luangeni village by earning enough to be able to pay health user fees (currently US$1.33).
- To facilitate access to education of at least 100 children in Luangeni village through increased household earnings, by the end of 2001.
- To promote gender equality by ensuring that there is equal participation in production activities and economic empowerment of both men and women in all participating households, and also ensuring that female-headed households are given equal chances in this empowerment process.

This partnership is potentially capable of facilitating the Luangeni community to earn about K5,000,000 (US$1,389) per week! This is the amount of money that Shoprite Chipata spends on vegetables alone in a week. Enabling the community to access this money through the supply of the vegetables that Shoprite requires, will tremendously increase the earning capacities of households in the area.

It is vividly evident from the above description that apart from growing staple foods for their own consumption, the Luangeni community households will also generate income that will enable them to improve and adopt new agricultural practices and processes to improve their standard of living.

The partnership is already working. It involves several partners, each one doing their specific role to achieve the objectives. The Luangeni farmers have begun delivering green beans, cabbage and tomatoes to Shoprite, and they are getting good prices. This smart partnership project will be replicated in several parts of the country. Shoprite has agreed to buy all the excess products and deliver them to other Shoprite outlets where the supply may be low. There is also a possibility of supplying the Lilongwe, Malawi market. It is important to note though that this was not an easy process to breakthrough. Also social responsibility is not about handouts but more personalized philanthropy, which is part of good business practise. This we believe is a partnership worth talking about!

Further details on the Partnership Forum can be obtained from:
The Partnership Forum
c/o Phoenix Contractors International
P O Box 34083
Lusaka
ZAMBIA
Policy challenges for FANRPAN

In November, Mr Jerry Tube, the Assistant Director of the National Department of Agriculture (NDA) in South Africa addressed a FANRPAN strategic and business plan workshop in Johannesburg, South Africa. In his opening address, Mr Tube expressed his full support of the FANRPAN network. Mr Tube heads the Policy Division of the NDA in South Africa.

Mr Tube shared the following thoughts on the FANRPAN network and how to make policy making effective in Southern Africa.

How do you make policy making effective in our region?

The quality of the network determines the quality of the policies. The policy of the network therefore needs to be sound if the policies it is going to propose are to be sound. In South Africa for example, everyone has been drawing up policies, a process that has become an end in themselves with very little implementation. People have tended to regard policies as their work and this has eroded our legitimacy as policy makers.

What are the challenges facing the policy making process?

The challenges for our network as I see it are:

- Relevance - We may run in danger of being alternatives to actual work. Policy needs to be grounded within the stakeholders for it to be relevant. Policy must address the felt needs of the intended beneficiaries.
- The FANRPAN network needs to ensure that policy is not determined by elites and intellectuals but ensure that it is based on the established needs of the people.
- Policies have tended to be too watered down and too broad. The network must use its influence to ensure that nodes represent the wishes of the stakeholders.
- Policy making needs to be coordinated nationally and regionally. Coordination is important and FANRPAN needs to realize that for it to be strong, country nodes need to be strengthened. FANRPAN will only be as good as its weakest member of the country nodes. It is important that the network be built from the bottom up.
- As a region we suffer from all problems facing less developed countries such as HIV/AIDS, lack of growth, low income, lack of human capacity and we need the courage to push for innovative policy prescriptions. It is worth noting that already FANRPAN has been tasked to coordinate HIV/AIDS Impact studies in the SADC region with short and long term strategies to minimize the negative effects of this scourge.

FANRPAN Web Designing Course

has been beneficial to our Faculty. We thank CTA for the assistance and hope that this resource you will receive will not stay in your minds but be spread all over the region through good websites," Dean Chivinge further noted.

The FANRPAN Coordinator, Mr Howard K Sigwele closed the workshop and reminded the participants that during the duration of the course in Harare, the whole world was in Qatar talking about trade. The developing world especially Africa has often fallen behind in communications.

"We believe the training that our stakeholders have received these past weeks will assist our region to be part of the 21st world." Mr Sigwele explained that, communications was a major strategy for the FANRPAN network for the next 10 years. "We at FANRPAN are hoping that the website will be able to communicate our services, and outputs effectively. Training is for improving skills and knowledge and should not be for you participants alone, but to be shared with others back in your home countries."

Throughout the duration of the two weeks workshop, participants were acquainted with strategic issues involved in web publishing, planning, conception, development, as well as intensive familiarization with the mechanics and logistics of setting up and maintaining an institutional website.

Upcoming Events

- Managing Networks, FANRPAN/CTA Workshop, Gaborone, Botswana. March 11-18, 2002