
**KULPAWN
VEGETABLE
GROWERS,
YAGABA**

FINAL REPORT

WEST MAMPRUSI

Millennium Development Authority (MiDA)

**COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT FOR FARMER BASED-
ORGANIZATIONS (CDFO)**

**REPORT ON TRAINING AND TRAINING-RELATED ACTIVITIES
FOR DESIGNATED FBOS IN WEST MAMPRUSI DISTRICT(S) FOR
PHASE 4 STAGE ONE**

7TH AUGUST, 2010-15TH SEPTEMBER, 2010



**Kulpawn Vegetable Growers Farmer Group with Trainer-Dr (Mrs) Mary
Obodai**

Executive Summary

A six week training programme was conducted for the Kulpawn Vegetable Growers Farmers Group from Yagaba of the West Mamprusi district. The Kulpawn Vegetable Growers Farmers Group was one of the eleven (11) groups, CSIR-Food Research Institute trained. This training was part of the consultancy services the Food Research Institute of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research was tasked to perform for MiDA. The training was on the development of business capacity and some of the topics taught were MCA Ghana Program – economic growth and poverty reduction, FBOs , rural development and commercialization, Business vision through a value chain lens, a short primer on producer organization principles, developing business expansion strategies, developing the action Agenda, driving the organization change and action business plan. A training needs assessment of the group was conducted in the first week to identify the lapses in the farmers' knowledge. The objective of the commercial development of farmer based organization was to change the mindset of farmers so that they see farming as a business rather than a way of life. The Kulpawn Vegetable Growers Farmers Group consists of thirty nine (39) members made up of twenty six (26) males and thirteen (13) females. The training venue for week one was carried out Yagaba R/C JSS. Subsequent trainings will be held at the World Vision Primary School, Yagaba. The training affected the harvesting activities of the farmers.

Dr (Mrs) Mary Obodai was the trainer for the Kulpawn Vegetable Growers Farmers Group and was assisted by an interpreter Mr Alhassan Abudu and replaced later by Mr Maleo Joseph Dadoo. The content of the modules was very comprehensive. The farmers were motivated to attend the training because of the information they had from previous trained farmers from Loagri No. 1. The farmers were confident that they would gain knowledge through the training and also access credit. The farmers appreciated the knowledge gained and were thankful for the training on commercialization of their farming activities because they agreed that it will help increase their production and profitability.

1.0 Introduction

The Food Research Institute of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research has conducted a six weeks training programme for eleven (11) selected Farmer Based Organizations in the West Mamprusi District of the Northern Region of Ghana for MiDA. The training in Business Capacity Building was carried out from 7th August to 15th September, 2010. Each FBO received three sessions of four hour duration each per week over the course of six weeks totaling 18 training sessions. Kulpawn Vegetable Growers from the Yagaba community of the West Mamprusi District was one of the farmer based organization to benefit from this training. This part of the northern region is popularly known as "Overseas". The group has thirty nine (39) members with twenty six (26) males and thirteen (13) females. The group has been in existence for just over a year. It is governed by bye-laws. The leadership structure of the group is made up of a Chairman (Solomon Apina), Secretary (Maleo Joseph Dadoo), Treasurer (Tiah Tidow) and an organiser (Azundow Nabila). The group has a savings bank account at the Agricultural Development Bank, Bolgatanga with account number 9011500088604. The signatories to the account are the Chairman, the Secretary and the Treasurer. The group pays monthly dues of GH¢1.00. The group meets on the first Friday of every month.

Farming is their main occupation but some rear and the women also do petty trading. The group support themselves by assisting each other in specific farming activities such as planting and harvesting during the major/minor cropping seasons. Members support each other in the form of donations (cash or kind) to bereaved or sick members and victims of crop failure and natural disasters. The major crops grown are maize, beans, millet and rice. The minor crops are beans and millet. They sell their produce individually at the Fumbisi market. Most members are unable to apply fertilizers because of lack of credits to buy them. Those who do apply the fertilizers do it in minimal amounts which affect the yields. About 90% of members of the FBO are Muslims and the rest are Christians.

2.0 Background of assignment including brief on Training needs

Training needs of Kulpawn Vegetable Growers Farmers Group based on challenges

| | No Problems | Some Problems | Many Problems | Cause of Problems / Causes | Training Needs |
|---|-------------|---------------|---------------|--|----------------|
| <i>Module 1:</i> | | | x | | |
| • The MCA Ghana Program – economic growth and poverty reduction | | | x | Little knowledge, not well informed about MCA. | Yes |
| • Commercial Development of FBOs (CDFO) | | | x | Very little idea about module 1. | Yes |
| | | | x | | Yes |

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|---|--|---|---|---|--------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation Support • Key Compact Constituencies • The Beginning of a Process | | | x | | Yes Yes |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crop production: | | x | | <p>Very little knowledge of time of land preparation, in- appropriate ploughing methods, soil management is non-existing. Exact measure of an acre is assumed. Fair idea of improved seeds and where to get them. Due to lack of credit, minority of the members go for early maturing, drought and disease resistant varieties. Knowledge of fertilizer but little knowledge on proper application</p> | Yes |
| <p><i>Module 2:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Why FBOs are Important for Rural Development ▪ Functions of Producer Organizations ▪ Functions as Member Services ▪ Unique Characteristics and Challenges of FBOs ▪ Elements of Strong FBOs ▪ Commercialization and Best Practices | | x | x | <p>Very little knowledge about rural development, weak knowledge of producer organization. Have bye-laws and meeting times.</p> | Yes Yes Yes Yes |

| | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|--|--|--|---|
| <p><i>Module 3:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why Value Chains are Important for the Ghana Compact • Value Chain Framework • Elements of the Value Chain • Why Value Chain Growth is Important to FBO • Value Chain Thinking as a Tool for Business Strategy | | | <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> | <p>Hearing the value-chain concept for the first time.</p> | <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> |
| <p><i>Module 4:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Business Vision for an FBO and Who Needs It? • How FBOs Benefit from Business Vision • Business Vision vis-à-vis Business Plan • Developing Vision for your FBO • Practice Using the Value Chain Lens • The Visioning Process • Drafting the Vision Statement | | | <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> | <p>Have targets based on subsistence farming to cater for immediate family</p> | <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> |
| <p><i>Module 5:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing Concepts of Leadership, Management and Governance • Basics of Board Operation • Review of Key Organization Documents • Defining Duties and Responsibilities of Office Holders • Importance of Member Services and Meetings • Approaches to Financial | <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> | | | <p>leadership is very active, meeting schedules are defined, poor record keeping, lack of knowledge of group activities by some members, lack of group cohesion, have bye-laws, simply lack of planning, organizational and leadership skills.</p> <p>FBO has never taken any financial assistance or loan</p> | <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> |

| | | | | | |
|---|--|--|----------------------------|---|--|
| Management | | | | | |
| <p><i>Module 6:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization Self-Assessment and Team Building • What is SWOT Analysis and How to Use It • Defining Attributes and Challenges • Brainstorming Strategies • Sources and Uses of Funds, • Identifying tactics, • Targets and Strategies | | | X X X X X X | <p>Very weak knowledge of self assessment, do not have any idea of SWOT. The concept is new</p> | <p>Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes</p> |
| <p><i>Module 7:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From Strategy to Action (Review Strategies and Tactics, Identify Requirements for Change, Move to Taking Stock) • Defining Resource Requirements (Strategy, Key Steps/tactics, Requirements for Change, Actions to Tactics and Implement Change. Resource Requirements Maximizing Sales) | | | X X | <p>Very weak knowledge of concepts</p> | <p>Yes Yes</p> |
| <p><i>Module 8</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirements for change identified by the business planning process • What Organization Changes Need to be made? | | | X X | <p>Very weak knowledge</p> | <p>Yes Yes</p> |

| | | | | | |
|---|--|--|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change agenda components • Defining Tasks/Steps (Member level, Organization level) • Ensuring carrying out of the agreed actions in the Business Plan) | | | <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> | | <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> |
| <p>Module 9 Action business Plan</p> <p>Financial Management Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pro forma cash flow-projection of what the business plan means to show cash inflow and outflow over period of time and is use for internal planning. • Prime interest to a lender to show how one intends to repay loan. • Shows how much and when cash must flow into the business. • Credit Management | | | <p>x</p> <p>x</p> <p>x</p> <p>x</p> | <p>No knowledge</p> <p>No knowledge</p> | <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> |

After the training the farmers gained much knowledge about the various topics in the modules taught. The Kulpawn Vegetable Growers Farmers Group were very attentive and asked very relevant questions. They admitted that this was the first time they have had such training on the commercialization drive and they are prepared to move from the subsistence level farming into commercial farming.

3.0 Training venues and logistical challenges

The major logistical problems encountered during the training of the Kulpawn Vegetable Growers Farmers Group from Yagaba were reduction in attendance to training at during Fumbisi market days.

4.0 Trainers and Training equipment

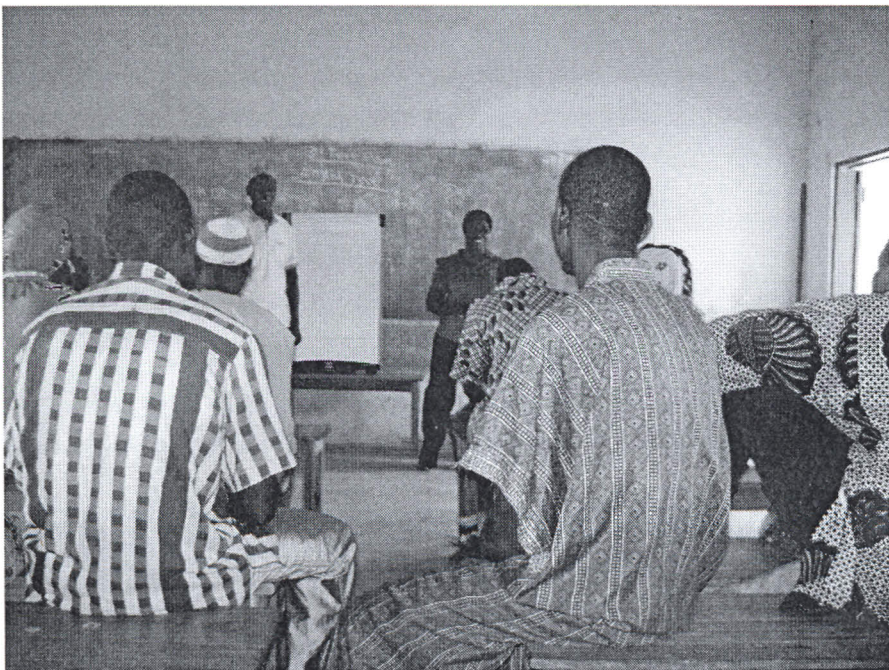
Table 1: A table, indicating the FBO ID #, the FBO name, the location of FBO and the trainer for the FBO

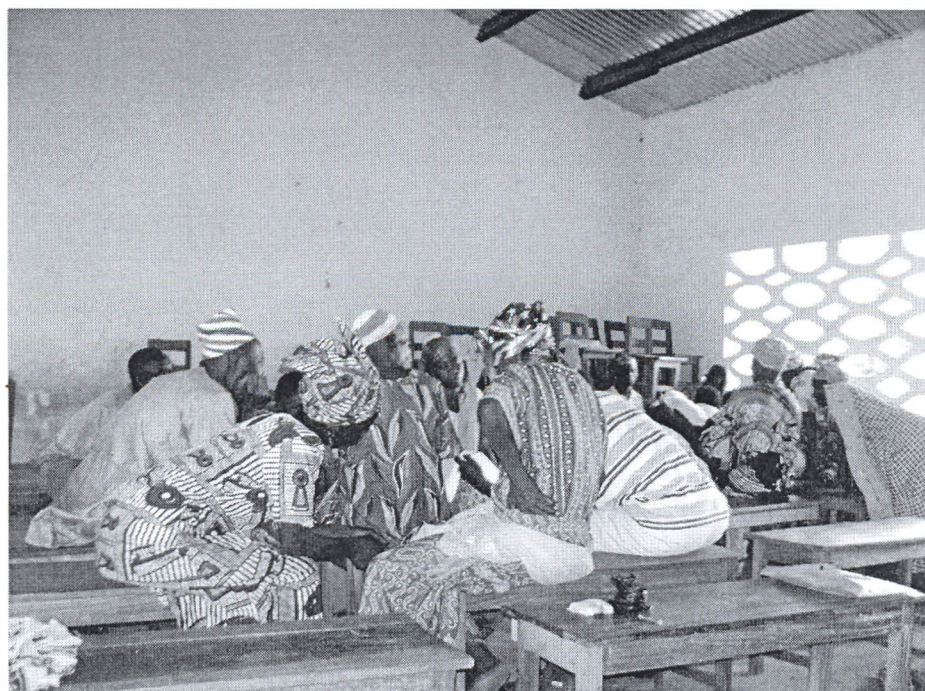
| FBO Identification Number | FBO name | Location of FBO | Names of Trainer(s) |
|---------------------------|--|-----------------------|----------------------|
| NAZ081216G03Fr | Kulpawn Vegetable Growers Farmers' Group | Yagaba, WEST MAMPRUSI | Dr (Mrs) Mary Obodai |

Materials used for training.

The materials used for training are flip-chart board, flip charts, markers because it made teaching and learning easier considering the literacy level of the farmers. Most farmers (87%) can neither read nor write.

5.0 Lessons from Approaches and Methodology





Farmer co-operation during group discussions

a. Summary of selected modules / topics for each week and a brief outline of methodology used for each in a tabular form

Table 2: The table of the modules for the indicated week

| Week (with dates) | MODULE NUMBER & TITLE | TOPIC (if applicable) | TRAINING METHODOLOGY |
|---|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Week 1 10th, 11th & 12th August, 2010 | Module 1: MCA Ghana Program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture Project structure • Commercial Development of FBOs(CDFO) • Implementation Arrangements • MiDA- Your Development Partner • Implementation Support • Key Compact Constituencies • Course objectives | Lectures Discussion Group discussion Demonstration |

| | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p>WEEK 2 16th, 17th & 18th August, 2010</p> | <p>Module 2: FBOs, Rural Development and Commercialization Module 3: Value chain Thinking</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Beginning of a process • Why FBOs are important for rural Development • Functions of Producer Organisation • Functions as member services • Unique characteristics and challenges of FBOs • Elements of Strong FBOs • Commercialization and best practices | <p>Lectures Discussion Group discussion Demonstration</p> |
| <p>WEEK 3 23rd, 24th & 25th August, 2010.</p> | <p>Module 4: Business vision through a value chain lens</p> <p>Module 5: A short Primer on Producer Organization Principles</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why value chains are important for the Ghana compact. • Value Chain framework • Elements of the value chain • Why value chain Growth is important to FBO • Value chain thinking as a tool for business strategy • What is Business Vision for an FBO and Who needs it • How FBOs benefit from Business Vision • Business vision vis-a vis Business Plan • Practice using the value chain lens • The visioning process • Drafting the vision statement • Reviewing concepts of leadership, Management and Governance | <p>Lectures Discussion</p> <p>Lectures</p> |

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p>Week 4, 30th, 31st August & 1st Sept. 2010</p> | <p>OCB Modules 1</p> <p>OCB Module 2</p> <p>OCB Module 3</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basics of board operation • Review of key organization Documents • Defining Duties and Responsibilities of office holders • Importance of Member Services and meetings • Approaches to Financial Management | <p>Discussion Group discussion Demonstrations</p> |
| | <p>Module 6: Developing Business Expansion Strategies</p> <p>Module 7: Developing the Action Agenda</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group formation and development • Credit Management • Contracts and Procurements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization Self-Assessment and Team Building • What is SWOT Analysis and How to Use It • Defining Attributes and Challenges • Brainstorming Strategies • In-depth Technical Assessment (Production Practices, Harvesting Practices, Approach to harvesting, Post Harvest Handling Practices, Primary processing, storage, value Added practices, organization and Management practices) • Sources and Uses of Funds, • Identifying tactics • Finalizing Strategies • Final check on Vision, Targets and Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From Strategy to Action (Review Strategies and Tactics, Identify Requirements for Change, Move to Taking | <p>Lectures Discussion</p> <p>Lectures Discussion Group discussion</p> |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| <p>Week 5 6th, 7th & 8th Sept., 2010.</p> | <p>Module 8: Driving The organization change</p> <p>OCB Module 4</p> <p>OCB Module 5</p> | <p>Stock)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining Resource Requirements (Strategy, Key Steps/tactics, Requirements for Change, actions to Tactics and Implement Change. Resource Requirements • Customizing Training and Technical Support(Technical Training and Maximizing Sales) • A note about Performance Monitoring • From Action Agenda to Business Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirements for change identified by the business planning process • What Organization Changes Need to be made? • Change agenda components • Defining Tasks/Steps (Member level, Organization level) • Assigning and Agreeing on Responsibilities (Completing the plan, developing work plan per strategy. Meeting with RICs • Ensuring carrying out of the agreed actions in the Business plan • • Business and technical communications • Methods for tracking FBO's progress. | |
|---|--|--|--|

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p>Week 6 13th, 14th & 15th Sept., 2010</p> | <p>Module 9: Action Business Plan</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directions for completing the Business Plan • Completing the Business plan (Background to action business plan, the action business plan) • Next steps • Evaluation of training • End of training | <p>Discussion Group discussion</p> <p>Discussion Group discussion</p> |
|---|---|---|---|

Module 1: The MCA Ghana Compact

FBO's Knowledge of MCA Ghana before training

It was noted at the beginning of the training that trainees had an idea about the MCA Ghana Compact from other farmers who had been trained earlier. However, it must be emphasized that trainees did not have a thorough understanding of the concept of the MCA Ghana Compact. The three components of the MCA Ghana Compact were not known to them and implementation arrangements and various selected zones to benefit from the Agricultural project. The commercial development of the Farmer Based Organization was also not clear to them. The objective of the session was to emphasize that Agriculture which is the backbone of the country could go a long way to reduce poverty and bring about economic growth if it is commercialized. The training methodology used were lectures and demonstrations.

Crop Budget Analysis

To assist the farmers objectively choose the major crop they would be cultivating under the MiDA programme, the Kulpawn Vegetable Growers Farmers Group compared the expected profits they would be making with respect to what goes into production of maize, beans, millet and rice . Some of the input costs were also based on the prices of the last cropping season. However, the current prices of commodities as pertains on the major markets around the communities were used. The Kulpawn Vegetable growers Farmers Group settled on cropping maize in the major cropping season.

Farmers' knowledge level of MCA Ghana Compact after training

After the training sessions, trainees understood very well the MCA Ghana Compact, the various components particularly the Agricultural project which presents a unique opportunity for them to reduce poverty through economic growth led by agricultural transformation. This could be achieved through increase in production.

Conclusion/key Message

At the end of the training sessions in Module 1, the participants generally agreed that the training module had greatly increased their knowledge on the MCA Ghana Compact and their drive into commercializing their farming activities.

Module 2: FBO's, rural development and commercialization

-Members of the Kulpawn Vegetable Growers Farmers Group were taken through rural development and commercialization of farmer based organization. The discussion centered on the importance of group and group formation, group functions and services. The characteristic and challenges of FBO, elements of strong FBO, best practice in commercialization among others were explained.

Value chain

Participants were introduced to value and value chains concepts and its relationship to economic growth and poverty reduction. Participants were taken through how the market system operates with respect to the major crops produced. They were taught how their crops move within the commodity chain and how they could transform commodity chain thinking into value chain thinking so as to take advantage of markets at different levels by repositioning themselves in the chain.

The definition of 'value chain' was given as the path that a crop or product takes as it moves from field or factory to the marketplace. It was pointed out that at each stop or step along the way, value (not just price) is added to the product. The farmers were taught that each vertical step in a value chain is a market for the step below. The value chain includes all activities that it takes to bring a product to the market, including horizontal linkages to suppliers of goods and services.

Value Chains and the Ghana Compact

To achieve economic growth through agriculture, Ghana needs to increase the competitiveness of the value chains which take key crops into international marketplaces. Value chain thinking is practiced worldwide by competitive firms which realize that the key to profitability is the ability to move a product into the market place at prices which both satisfy customers and carry the lowest possible overheads. Participants were made to realize that Ghana's agriculture is key to the country's economic growth and that to achieve economic growth that is sustainable and reduces poverty, value chains must operate with expanded opportunities for Farmer based organization (FBO). For this to happen, FBOs must understand value chains and be able to use this understanding to strengthen their organization and their approaches to doing business. The

participants were taught the basic concepts behind value-added thinking. The methodologies used are lectures, demonstration and discussion.

Participants Knowledge and Skills Evaluation

It was noted at the commencement of the module 3 that trainees had a fair idea about value addition to agricultural produce. Due to lack of resources and understanding of how the market operates is what has delayed their practice of the value chain concept. After this module, the Kulpawn Vegetable Growers Farmers Group had improved their understanding of the subject and were ready to take advantage of the opportunities in the market as regards the maize the FBO chose to commercialize.

Conclusion/key message

Participants learnt for the first time about rural development through commercial farming. At the end of the module, the farmers' appreciated that value chains can be used as tools for increasing profitability. The farmers appreciated the concept and were poised to add value to their produce in order to by-pass the middlemen in the value chain.

Module 4: Business Vision through a Value Chain Lens

The Kulpawn Vegetable Growers Farmers Group was taken through the business vision concept. The elements of a good business vision were identified as a vision statement and targets for achievement. The characteristics of a good business vision are that it must be time bound, must be accompanied by specific volume targets and vision must be realistic and considered achievable. The benefits of an FBO having a business vision were looked at. These included group cohesion, ability to design activities which fulfill member expectations and ability to identify and set targets. The participants were later taken through the vision development process. The participants were aided to assess their current performance levels and to set targets which the FBO seeks to achieve over the next two years. During the business vision drafting stage participants were divided into four groups, each presented their vision. Participants were guided to write down draft business vision statements based on the contribution from the four groups.

Module 5: Leadership, Governance and Management

In this module participants were introduced to the complementary nature of the three concepts of leadership, governance and management. It was stressed that individuals within an organization may play one or more of these roles but usually not at the same time. The importance of organizational leadership and how it works within organizations were treated. Other areas discussed were what leadership roles were, characteristics of good leaders and characteristics of effective boards. Governance as the power of making and administering organization policies with regard to programs, relationships and limitations of authority were explained to participants. The methodologies used are lectures, demonstration and discussion.

Participants Knowledge and Skills Evaluation

Module 5 gave the Kulpawn Vegetable Growers Farmers Group more insight on the different levels of leadership and the roles they play. The understanding of the module motivated them to involve all members in the running of the organization by setting up committees.

Conclusion/ key message

The members of the FBO appreciated that they can only succeed in the commercialization drive if only they work together and support those in leadership, management and governance positions. They also realized the complementary nature of the leadership, management and governance concept.

Module 6: Developing Business Expansion Strategies

In this module key strategies for the FBO business expansion were looked at. Kulpawn Vegetable Growers Farmers Group was assisted to use the SWOT analysis as a tool to evaluate the factors both internal and external to the organization which can affect its ability to carry out a business venture. The SWOT analysis framework was used by the participants to brainstorm internal factors such as production, marketing and selling practices, finance, post harvest handling and management practices and classify them as strengths or weaknesses. The same thing was done for external factors which were classified into threats or opportunities. Participants reviewed internal and external factors to identify attributes and challenges. Strengths and opportunities put together form the attributes which work in favor of the organization's ability to achieve its business vision. Challenges are the weaknesses and threats which have the potential to work against the organization's ability to achieve its business vision. Participants were then engaged in identification of attributes and challenges exercise which was followed with a brainstorming session on strategies. A list of strategies was then developed. An in-depth technical assessment of the FBO in the areas of production practices, harvesting practices, post-harvest handling practices, primary processing, storage, value-added practices, marketing practices and organization and management practices was the second form of assessment which the FBO examined.

A short list of tactics that participants felt could be used to guide the FBO activity in each category was noted. The strategies were then finalized using; each strength, addressing each weakness, taking advantage of the opportunities and getting ready to meet each threat.

Module 7: Developing the Action Agenda

The participants worked the strategies and tactics arrived at to develop elements of an action agenda for inclusion in their business plans. The action agenda gives the specific steps the FBO will take at the member, organizational and value chain levels to support achievements of strategies and vision. To move from strategy to action, farmers were assisted to review each strategy and list the tactics which correspond to it. Participants were divided among each strategy and each group reviewed all of its related tactics to make sure that the strategy with which it is working is supported by all of the tactics that it needs. Participants were made to appreciate that for a successful implementation of any business plan, specific actions will be

required to bring about what is expected. To ensure that the right actions are chosen, it was important to first identify the changes that would have to take place in the organization.

During discussions, Kulpawn Vegetable Growers Farmers Group realized that the desired change will have to occur at the member level, organizational level and value chain level.

Module 8: Driving Organizational Change

In this module participants looked specifically at defining an agenda for the management of organizational and technical changes that would support the ability of the FBO to continue with their business planning efforts. It was agreed that requirements for change identified by the business planning process meant that a plan to manage the change is very necessary. The farmers' appreciated that implementation of the change has to be driven through the organization with leadership playing a key role. There was a need to enforce an action assignment, definition of responsibilities and commitments, manage arrangements and define action steps needed to achieve change at member and organization levels. The Kulpawn Vegetable Growers Farmers Group agreed that at member levels it would be useful to appoint member leaders, set up committees, support implementation and communication, hold meetings to introduce plan, invite members to contribute to training design and structure member feedback channels. At the organization level, development of revenue generation plan, preparation of management plan, analysis of financial impacts of plan implementation and completion of business plan were very important. The methodologies used are lectures, demonstration, group discussion and discussion.

Participants Knowledge and Skills Evaluation

Participants had a very good understanding of what the vision and strategies of the FBO were. They also learnt about practical steps to address the strategies. The modules equipped the farmers to come up with action agendas. The changes that the FBO had to go through were recognized and a management plan put in place. The farmers' knowledge and skill on the two subject areas improved considerably.

Conclusion/key message

The participants appreciated the importance of assessment and the changes at the member, organizational levels in order to achieve the action agenda and improve strategies for business development.

Module 9: Completing the Draft Business Action Plan

Based on the activities carried out in the eight modules, Kulpawn Vegetable Growers Farmers Group was assisted to put together their business plan. The first part of this exercise dealt with the background to the plan and it covered areas such as background information about the FBO, description of the operating structure, overview of current practices and assessment of environment and opportunities. Part two of the business plan drafting was based on the action agenda and areas such as vision and targets of the FBO, action plans for implementation of each strategy and management plan.

Participants Knowledge and Skills Evaluation

Participants had good understanding of the concept of turning their subsistence farming into a commercial venture before the commencement of Module 9. All the knowledge, information and skills gained in the previous modules were brought to bear on completing the draft action business plan.

Conclusion/key message

Members of the FBO appreciated the business plan development and confessed that they have really gained knowledge through this course. They proved that they had gained knowledge about farming as a business. A draft copy of the business plan was completed.

Module 9: Completing the Draft Business Action Plan

In the final week, Module 9 was continued. The background information about the FBO, their operating structure, overview of current practices and assessment of environment and opportunities collated was confirmed. The vision, strategies, actions and tactics were finally fed into the business plan.

Participants Knowledge and Skills Evaluation

All the knowledge and skills acquired in the earlier modules were brought to bear on completing the draft action business plan. Participants after going through all the nine (9) modules were very anxious to begin the commercialization their farming activities. The farmers were poised to go through the second stage training in order to come by the starter pack and the Mida loan.

Conclusion/key message

The training session for the week was excellent since the farmers proved that they had gained knowledge to help in their business drive. They greatly showed appreciation for the knowledge gained and the content of the material they had gone through for the past weeks.

Follow-up activities by trainers and trainees

The Agricultural extension Agents (AEAs) accompanied the CSIR-FRI team to visit the executives of the FBOs and opinion leaders in the communities. The AEAs assigned to the Yagaba community supported during the training sessions and will follow up on the performance and challenges of the farmer based organization. The AEAs will assist also in the stage two training.

b. Lessons for improving future training.

- i. The content of the modules were very appropriate because the participants confessed that they had really gained much knowledge which will go a long way in aiding their commercialization drive. The farmers agreed that the content of the modules will immensely help in their farming activities.

- ii. Most of the participants were illiterates but they understood the modules because the interpreter did his work well and even gave illustrations to stress the points taught in the various modules. The contents of some of the modules were a bit technical, if simplified will help the farmers because most of them are illiterates.
- c. As a result of this training, do you anticipate that the participating FBOs will?
- i. The members of the Kulpawn Vegetable Growers Farmers Group were poised to engage in collective purchase and to be involved in such a process they constituted a purchasing committee who will be responsible for the purchase of inputs, agrochemicals and fertilizers. They also understood the benefits of engaging in collective purchasing through credits.
 - ii. The Kulpawn Vegetable Growers Farmers Group will definitely engage in collective marketing because it is one of the strategies they adopted in order to achieve their vision of increasing production.
 - iii. The FBO members are ready to engage in collective activities since they are now aware of the benefits of being in a group such as theirs. They became aware about their access to credits and support services as a group.
 - iv. The stage one training was very beneficial to the farmers. However training alone is not enough that is why the stage two training is essential because that training will be more practical to the farmers and highly appreciated. The Kulpawn Vegetable Growers Farmers Group will be able to successfully and sustainably become more efficient and productive after the stages one and two training and when they have access to credits.

6.0 Tracking indicators

Table 3: Number and percentage of Kulpawn Vegetable Growers Farmers Group and leadership trained on various modules .

| Name of FBO | Location | District | Number FBO members trained for each module (Percentage of leadership of FBO participating) | | | |
|-------------|----------|----------|--|----------|----------|----------|
| | | | Module 1 | Module 2 | Module 3 | Module 4 |
| | | | | | | |

| | | | | OCB modules 1-3 | | |
|---|--------|------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|---|
| Kulpawn Vegetable Growers Farmers Group | Yagaba | West Mamprusi | 37(95%), 3(75%) | 38(97%), 4(100%) | 35(90%), 4(100%) | 35(89%), 4(100%) |
| | | | Module 5 | Module6 | Module 7 | Module 8 OCB modules 4&5 |
| | | | 38(97%), 4(100%) | 37(95%), 4(100%) | 35(90%), 4(100%) | 37(95%), 4(100%) |
| | | | Module 9 | | | |
| | | | 34(87%), 4(100%) | | | |

7.0 Participants knowledge and skills Evaluation

| FBO | Location | District | MODULES | Modal Level of Knowledge and skills before training | Modal Level of Knowledge and skills after training | Remarks |
|---|----------|---------------|---------|---|--|---|
| Kulpawn Vegetable Growers Farmers Group | Yagaba | WEST MAMPRUSI | 1 | Fair | Good | The concept of the MiDA project and the role of FBOs is now very clear to the trainees |
| | | | 2 | Fair | Good | Trainees appreciated the importance of FBOs as key drivers for rural development |
| | | | 3 | Fair | Good | Trainees understood how they could transform commodity chain thinking into value chain thinking which will help them to negotiate for better prices |
| | | | 4 | Fair | Good | Farmers listened attentively |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|------|-----------|---|
| | | | 5 | Fair | Good | Farmers appreciated the concept of leadership, governance and management. |
| | | | 6 | Fair | Good | Farmers were poised to implement the content of module. |
| | | | 7 | Fair | Good | Farmers gained knowledge on Action Agenda |
| | | | 8 | Fair | Good | Farmers appreciated the need to identify and manage the changes necessary |
| | | | 9 | Fair | Very Good | Farmers were ready to access the MIDA loan. |

8.0 Conclusions and Recommendations for alternative FBO capacity building strategies

The business capacity of the Kulpawn Vegetable Growers Farmers Group was developed because the group gained much knowledge as they went through the various modules. The contents of the modules were relevant and well understood by the farmers. The training methodology and delivery were excellent. Farmer's knowledge and skill increased after training and this affected their thinking, attitude and behaviour towards commercial farming immensely. Farmers showed lots of enthusiasm, though they said most of the subject areas (training modules) were new to

them. The business plan which would enable them access MCA funds as loans from banks in order for them to operate as commercial farmers was completed.

It is recommended that:

- The stage one training is held in the off-season so that the farmers may avail themselves more for the training.
- The content of the training material should be simplified to meet the standard of the farmers
- The Farmer Based Organization must be supervised and strengthen adequately.
- Credit facilities must be extended to farmers to purchase improved seeds, agrochemicals and fertilizers for commercial farming.
- Farmers must be trained on modern production technologies and post harvest technologies.
- Transport services and inaccessible roads must be improved for markets accessibility.
- Farmers must be encouraged to do group marketing for good produce prices.