



Pilot activities to create effective training materials on inclusive value chains

Effective training materials on inclusive value chains

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Final Report



The Centre for Development Innovation, part of Wageningen UR (Wageningen University & Research centre) works on processes of innovation and change in the areas of food and nutrition security, adaptive agriculture, sustainable markets, ecosystem governance, and conflict, disaster and reconstruction. It is an interdisciplinary and internationally focused unit of Wageningen UR within the Social Sciences Group.

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Pilot activities to create effective training materials on inclusive value chains

Effective training materials on inclusive value chains

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This report describes efforts to develop training materials to stimulate adoption of more inclusive ways of doing business. The target audiences are private companies, collaborating organisations and business students. The report includes links to two videos on coffee in Kenya and soy-based products in Ethiopia, as well as a general approach.

Cover photo

Coffee cupping, photo by Roger Reuver

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1 Project purpose

The purpose of the project was to develop a field-tested pilot version of training material that can be used to stimulate private companies seeking to adopt a more-inclusive approach to value chain operations. This will benefit smallholders and increasing their income-earning opportunities.

The aim was to develop a simple inclusive business presentation, based on PowerPoint, that incorporates a good visual presentation with the Harvard Business School teaching approach. This approach emphasizes stimulation of analytic thinking, discussion and hypothesis testing. The presentation would include the views of approximately five key stakeholders. Among them in any case the lead company and farmer organization. Other likely relevant actors include government, collaborating NGO and relevant research institutes. This could be amended depending on the nature of the value chain.

This pilot would assess the feasibility of developing such materials quickly and affordably. Developing the concept would lead to the production of several videos that would be used as input to a plenary session at the International Conference on Value Chains, held in Addis Ababa from 6-9 November 2012.

2 Key shortcomings of currently available case study materials

Given the large amounts of visual communications made around development issues, why then is a different approach needed? The following main shortcomings of most existing visual case studies is based on the authors' experience.

- They are written by non-business actors: business audiences cannot empathize with the actors nor situations presented, and cannot make the connection with their own situations.
- They are often stories with closed endings, and are not created to get parties to think actively about the case.
- They are single-purpose, and leave little room for discussion.
- They are not particularly relevant to inclusive business at scale, requiring a lot of effort to get audiences to extract key questions and ideas.

3 Possible objectives for communications / video material

A wide range of opportunities can be used to stimulate companies to think about more inclusive ways of doing business, and to support them in adopting specific practices. Effective video and training material would help in the following circumstances:

- To raise awareness of inclusive business practices at scale within:
 - Individual businesses (e.g. workshop in a change management process)
 - Chain-wide (e.g. workshop in a change management process)
 - Sector wide (e.g. business fair, conference)
 - National level (e.g. conference)
 - International level (e.g. conference)
 - Educational institutes with focus on agribusiness development;
- To identify bottlenecks in scaling inclusive approaches, and formulate possible solutions and set agenda;
- To reflect on past experiences and processes, and link reflections with strategy development;
- To enhance capacity building, such as through:
 - Regular training courses on private sector development
 - Tailor –made capacity building trajectories
 - In combination with HBS type case studies.

4 Possible target audiences

Effective communications start with thinking carefully about possible audiences. The pilots trialled here were made with the following audiences in mind:

- Companies (multinational and local based in developing countries) that are:
 - Not yet fully aware of what inclusive scaling is, or
 - Seeking to adopt more inclusive business practices by providing increased opportunities for smallholder involvement in agricultural value chains;
- Smallholders (indirect) with access to greater income-earning opportunities as a result of value chain inclusion;
- Policy makers, donor agencies interested in exploring how their policy development processes could contribute to inclusive scaling;
- University students to raise their awareness on inclusive scaling;
- Agribusiness trainees.

5 Communication challenges

Companies working in agricultural value chains often find it difficult to work with small farmers as they have only limited experience of how to interact at this level. At the same time, there is increasing pressure on companies to work more closely with suppliers as demand for traceability and the need to “know your supplier” increases and as pressure grows for value chains to meet sustainability criteria. Companies have to move from ad hoc purchases to closer involvement and collaboration with farmer suppliers.

The approach worked with was intended to bridge these gaps by making the perspective of all actors in the chain accessible to a business audience.

6 Expected results

The proposal foresaw in the following hoped for overall result. Key activities (A...) contributing to that result are indicated.

Overall result

Pilot training material developed that can be used by companies as the basis for planning greater value chain inclusion and that can be further adapted for use in other regions and countries.

Key Activities

A1 → R1: Development of a generic storyboard for two selected case studies.

A2 → R1: Pilot development in Kenya or Ethiopia , carried out by modern media professional with experience in developing visual materials.

A3 → R1: Editing visual material.

A4 → R1: Use of material at Conference in Addis Ababa.

A5 → R1: Developing template and generic approach usable for wider circulation.

7 Actual results

The following was produced in this pilot programme:

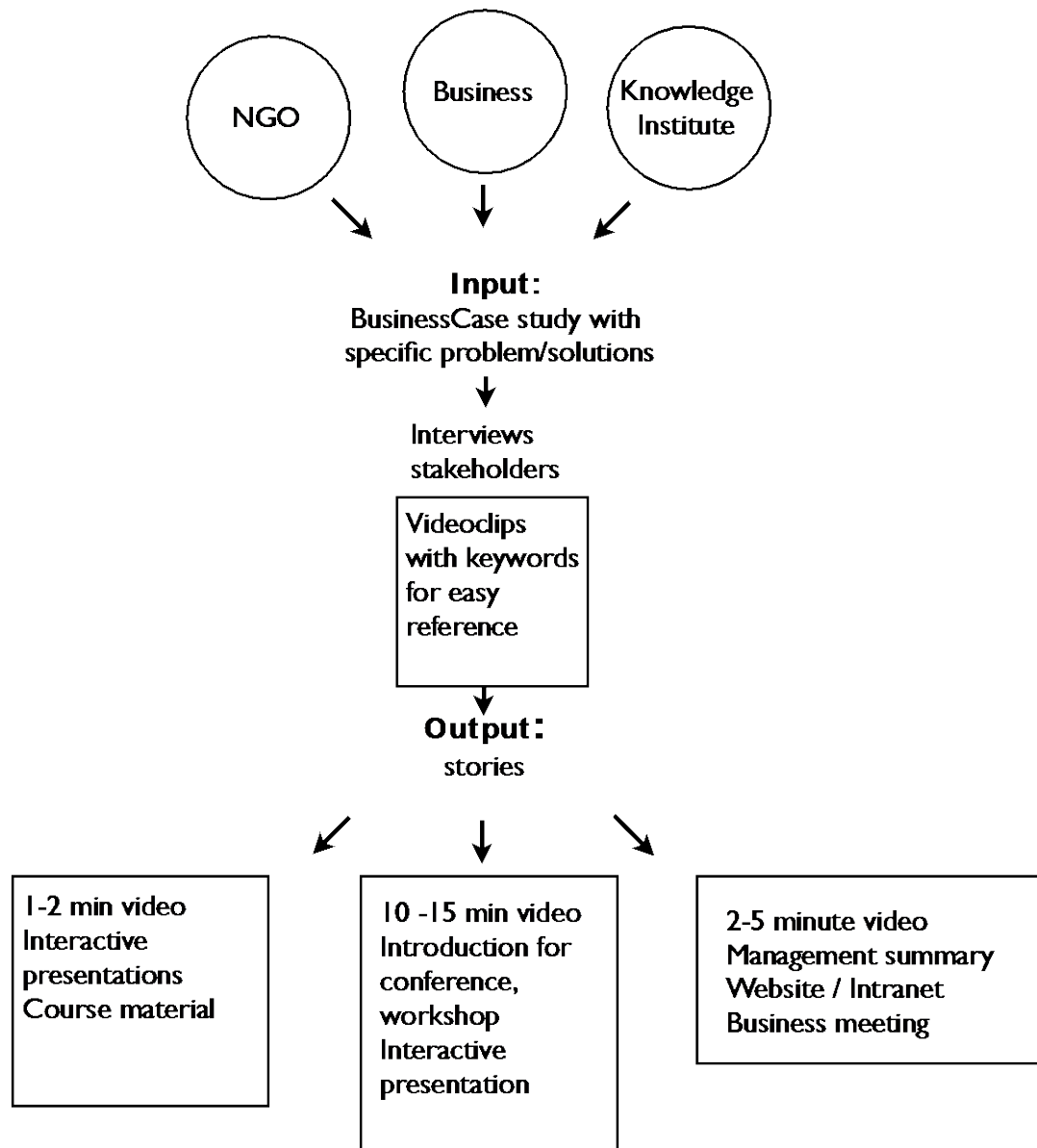
- 2x10 minute video's (for conference use):
 - Smallholder Farmers and Big Business in the Kenyan Coffee Trade. <https://vimeo.com/53067080>
 - New Soy Markets and Smallholder Sourcing in Ethiopia. <https://vimeo.com/53067079>;

- 2x5 minute versions for online use:
 - Smallholder Farmers and Big Business in the Kenyan Coffee Trade. <https://vimeo.com/55736818>
 - New Soy Markets and Smallholder Sourcing in Ethiopia. <https://vimeo.com/58613874>;

- Generic approach outline (see Appendix 1);

- Interactive version- mockup.

8 Elements of (video) communication strategy



9 Evaluation 1 (project team): Process and results

The project team internally evaluated the project for identifying improvement options for the future.

Process:

Positive

- Excellent team:
 - Roger: experience with visual media.
 - Joost: experience with private sector development and inclusive business development.
 - Monika: MBA combined with Masters in education, substantial teaching experience and background in private sector development;
- Good access to/cooperation with local farmers (Kenya) and business (both countries);
- As result of excellent organization, two weeks were sufficient for local production;
- Delivered in time for the conference in Addis Ababa;
- Joost/Monika's good input on sorting out the rough material;
- Editorial choices were made in time.

Negative

- Conference video was a high priority and didn't leave much time for the other deliverables (interactive approach, training video's etc.);
- Hard to keep everyone up to speed;
- Different expectations from CTA, HIVOS and Ecom. Not always well managed;
- Not much time/thought on distribution.

Results:

Positive

- Positive response from conference attendees;
- Positive response from Ecom;
- Shown about 120 times (within first three months);
- Business audience can empathize with these actors and relate them to their own situations;
- Stories are recent and relevant to businesses;
- Open ended stories leave room for discussion and active engagement;
- Tested in class-room setting – highly appreciated.

Negative

- Generic approach proves difficult to test, asks for a different MO;
- Focused on a business audience.

10 Evaluation 2: ECOM / Justin Archer

Ecom was asked to give their impression of the video and its value or not for business audiences. Below their feedback.

"As a general comment, we all thought this video was really excellent (fun, short & to the point, communicative, visual etc.)."

It has been shown in many forums, but mostly one-on-one meetings. It would have been shown more, except some users have been unable to access or download the video from Vimeo AND we were unsure whether Ecom had the rights to post the video (intranet, YouTube, email link etc.). We could definitely circulate it much wider if we knew for sure that we had the right to host it on our intranet for instance."

1. For what audience did you use the video, and do you have further intended uses?

- a. Internal - YES
- b. Farmers
- c. Clients - YES
- d. Others - YES

2. How did they react to the video?

Like it.

3. In what setting have you used the video? Best example: our new trade office in Australia are using it to demonstrate to new clients that Ecom is a company with a far reaching, and committed, network.

- a. Shown during a conference/meeting as part of a presentation,
- b. Shown during a training,
- c. On company website - *we would like to have those rights?*
- d. On company intranet - *we would like to have those rights?*
- e. Referred to in email, - *we would like to have those rights?*
- f. Other.

4. Do you think that the basic approach, if necessary with some adaptations, could be useful for anticipated communication needs? For example, Justin mentioned a large communication need in reaching out to 100.000 new farmers that SMS/Ecom want to bring into your supply chain. ABSOLUTELY. Farmers love seeing themselves on screen. Most farmers will only have an understanding of one part of the supply chain. A video like this really puts perspective on the whole business chain. A number of training activities can also be captured in a fun interactive way on video.

5. What roll do you feel NGO's and/or knowledge institutions could play in helping you communicate new practices and ideas within your company?

Pressing need: educate farmers on the value of long term thinking, and creating enduring relationships with service providers that deliver real change. This is not advertising (we need that too), but rather helping farmers to measure standards of different service providers. SMS vs the competition - who is better? Why chose them?

6. Would you consider participating in a project like this again ? If so do you have specific area's or subjects in mind?

Tough question... I would love to have videos documenting every part of everything we do. However, what I really did like about Roger's video was that it captured a lot in a short space - excellent overview...if I was greedy I would put more info on the logistics and trading aspect. After all, what is unique about SMS is that we are merchandising, logistics and risk management business that is doing agricultural support.

11 Lessons learned

- Get a business involved from the start in scripting and thinking of end use;
- Make more choices up front, preferably with a specific business problem in mind. Either choose for a narrower subject, or accept it will be a more exploratory journalistic approach without a fixed outcome;
- The generic approach might work. But it takes time and needs a much narrower focus and a different MO;
- Dilemmas between different actors must be presented very clearly in the case to initiate sharing of different views and discussions (key point of HBS case studies).

12 What is / could be next?

- Define possible product / market combinations regarding target audience and objectives;
- Make a clear distinction between VPA from our approach (one notable one: this approach is much less costly!);
- More research in (internal) communication needs of businesses in regards to scaling up inclusive practices. (pathways to change) How can you maximize the impact of using media like this, and in how can you involve business from the beginning. Choose formats accordingly;
- Follow up project Ecom / CDI / CTA ? This requires a better understanding of communication strategy;
- Use the lines of interest of Seas of Change for focus/scope?
- Possible partnerships?

Appendix 1 – Basic outline for generic approach

Making a coherent video on this topic requires following a **simple** yet **consistent** script. This script must be simple enough to allow people interviewed from wide-ranging backgrounds to tell their stories. At the same time it must be consistent enough that the stories connect with each other. That allows differences and commonalities to be easily observed.

There is a strong temptation to ask many complicated questions. This leads to lots of film time and many different angles to the central issue. Converting all that material into short, focused video's then takes an enormous amount of editing time, which is expensive. Either that, or the video ends up being far too long to be able to hold the attention of the viewer, which is counterproductive.

During the making of the two pilot video's a range of different questions were tried to see which lead to the clearest answers. The following simple questions proved to be quite effective in drawing out clear answers that could be threaded together into one story. Don't be deceived by their simplicity: it pays back in the final product to stick to such a simple storyline.

Businesses:

1. Introducing the central issue/present situation

Q: What company(products/services) do you represent?

Q: How do you source your product and what part of the sourcing comes from smallholder farmers?

Q: What's your present relationship with smallholder farmers?

2. Business point of view:

Q: What are the biggest changes in the last two years in your relationship with smallholder farmers?

Q: What are the business advantages in sourcing from smallholder farmers?

Q: What are the (two) biggest challenges in sourcing from smallholder farmers?

3. Future

Q: Which (two) changes would trigger the most improvement in doing business with smallholder farmers?

Q: Which (two) changes would trigger the most improvement in the livelihood of smallscale farmers?

Farmers:

1. Introducing the central issue/present situation

Q: Who are you, where are we?

Q: What do you grow? How important is soy/coffee/(key crop) to you?

Q: What present relationship do you have with buyers/markets?

2. Farmers' point of view

Q: What are the biggest changes in farming soy/coffee/etc. in the last two years?

Q: What are the business advantages in selling to different buyers?

Q: What are the (two) biggest challenges in farming soy/coffee/etc. for smallholder farmers?

3. Future

Q: Which (two) changes would trigger the most improvement in doing business for smallholder farmers?

Q: Which (two) changes would trigger the most improvement in the livelihood of smallholder farmers?

Appendix 2 – Pilot interactive business case

Pilot
Interactive
Business Case

CDI/CTA 2012
rogerreuver.com

Introduction Stakeholders



[Background](#) [Opportunities](#) [Approach](#) [Results](#)

Introduction Stakeholders



Stakeholders Background Opportunities Approach Results
Inclusiveness Inputs Womens Participation Finance

Background

Global Coffee trade is weak but stable, and Kenyan coffee is among the best in the world. Yet Kenya's production has dropped in 60% in 20 years.

Current annual production is 50,000 tons, valued at \$150 million.

70% comes from smallholder farmers.

Many value chains in origins that involve smallholder farming are characterized by low levels of farmer productivity, soil depletion and low grade crops.

Farmers are largely uneducated and value chain management is absent or underdeveloped. Knowledge of few exceptional farmers that manage to be significantly more productive than average is not shared.

The key players in the value chain are isolated and do not have upstream or downstream information. Production is based on high cost fossil fuels, depends on external chemicals and has a large environmental footprint.



Abraham Kita, Farmer.



Agnes Muchiri, SMS trainer.

Results

SMS Limited and Hivos started the first pilot in the Nyeri region in Kenya in 2006. By starting with 11,768 farmers in 4 cooperatives, the project reached a total of 58,435 farmer family members and the results were convincing.

After 3 years, average yield per tree had more than tripled from 1kg to 3.5kg and the average share of premium grades increased by 26% to 85% resulting in increased income by 69%

Other results are:

- increased trust in trade relations,
- information and efficiency in the value chain,
- additional income for promoter farmers,
- creation of stable farmer groups,
- active participation of younger farmers,
- women active in other economic activities and on decision-making positions,

In addition, the project addressed women's participation in the process and compost based fertilization.

[More>](#)

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Abraham Kita, Farmer.



Susan Nigeri, Farmer.

Results

Building upon the success – mainstreaming

Hivos and SMS scaled up implementation of the model with an additional 25.000 farmers in a second project in 2010. This project shows results inline with the 2006 project with higher cost efficiency (ca. €30 per farmer for 3 years).

A number of participating cooperatives are either on their way to certification or have been certified already.

SMS, who has mainstreamed this approach, is currently supporting a total of 85.000 farmers in Kenya. The model can easily expand to an additional 75.000 producers in Kenya (producer groups already identified). The model will also be applied in Tanzania and will be rolled out further in Uganda.

Given the results (cost-benefit) and the increasing concern on productivity and sustainability in our value chains, the model has a world-wide potential.





<u>Background</u>	<u>Opportunities</u>
<u>Approach</u>	<u>Results</u>

SMS, Jullius Ngana



Background	Opportunities
Approach	<u>Results</u>

Abraham Kimita, Farmer.



Background
Approach

Opportunities
Results

Ruthaka Farmers Association



Background
Approach

Opportunities
Results

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