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# AFRICA LEADERSHIP TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM

Developing a cadre of African leaders who will design and  
implement food security strategies and investment plans

## ENERGIZING CHAMPIONS FOR FOOD SECURITY: REFLECTIONS ON WHAT WORKS, WHY, AND WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES

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Prepared by Africa Lead



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# Part One

## Introduction and Background

This report describes findings from over 100 qualitative key informant interviews with mid- and senior-level professionals from ten sub-Saharan Africa countries who participated in leadership training for agriculture and food security provided by USAID's Africa Leadership Training and Capacity Building Program (Africa Lead.) The interviews were conducted July and August 2012 as part of knowledge management to document lessons learned from Africa Lead in relation to Task One Champions for Change leadership and management capacity building courses. The interviews contain feedback on **lessons learned** and **best practices** from training beneficiaries, referred to herein as Champions, on an important capacity building methodology for agriculture piloted by Africa Lead. They also give insight into how Africans perceive their own capacity building needs for agriculture and food security, and contain practical suggestions from these Champions for Change practitioners on how to ensure CAADP plays a meaningful role guiding agriculture development within their national and regional contexts.

### THE AFRICA LEAD PROGRAM

Africa Lead is USAID's main capacity building program for agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa. The program supports capacity building needs of the U.S. Government's Feed the Future Initiative, which aligns U.S. Government development assistance with African-owned agriculture development plans, which are in turn aligned with the African Union's Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program (CAADP.) Africa Lead was initially a two-year task order under the RAISE Plus Indefinite Quantity Contract (IQC) mechanism, designed to run from September 20, 2010 to September 30, 2012, with a budget ceiling of \$21,332,381. As of a September 30, 2012 contract modification, the program was extended through September 2013 and the ceiling was raised to \$26,182,381. Africa Lead is being implemented by RAISE Plus IQC holder, DAI, supported by Management Systems International (MSI), Winrock International, Training Resources Group (TRG), ECI Africa Consulting (pty) Ltd., and Michigan State University. Africa Lead was implemented through three regional offices: Accra, Ghana; Nairobi, Kenya; and Pretoria, South Africa from the beginning of the program until July 31, 2012 when the Pretoria office closed. Program implementation for Southern Africa was then taken over by the East Africa Office.

Africa Lead is a highly flexible mechanism that provides a menu of capacity building options to the USAID East and West Africa Regional Missions and to local Missions in all 12 African Feed the Future (FTF) focus countries, as well as FTF aligned countries. Africa Lead provides leadership and management training, institutional capacity assessments, logistical support for training workshops and meetings, and innovative short courses and internship/twinning arrangements prioritized in consultation with Missions and partner countries and institutions, and a database of trainings offered on the continent that can be matched to local leadership and capacity building needs. The flexibility of Africa Lead as a mechanism means that the same set of tools can be used for institutional capacity assessments and for capacity building needs in a wide range of different contexts and environments, and can be used at the continental, regional, national or sub-national levels. By providing USAID Missions with flexible capacity building options it strives to increase participation of African leaders and institutions engaged in the

CAADP process (SO1) and to strengthen key leaders technical and managerial skills and knowledge of agriculture systems and food security (SO2).

Africa Lead's activities fall into four Tasks: leadership and management training falls under Task One; logistical support for training workshops and meetings, and innovative short courses and internship/twinning arrangements fall under Task Two; institutional capacity assessments fall under Task Three; and developing a database of trainings offered on the continent falls under Task Four.

## **BACKGROUND ON TASK ONE**

The best practices/lessons learned (BP/LL) research described in this report focuses on Africa Lead's Task One: provision of leadership and management training to African food security leaders through two capacity building courses designed and delivered. Two key outcomes which USAID hopes to achieve from Task One training include establishing a strong cadre of leaders to spearhead implementation of the CAADP framework and National Agriculture Investment Plans (NAIPs) at the national level, and to establish individual action plans which trainees will follow to advance inclusive, pro-poor agriculture growth and food security agendas in the context of their roles, networks and institutions at home.

As of December 31, 2012, Task One remained one of Africa Lead's biggest service areas with 1,616 mid- and senior-level professionals and politicians trained in leadership skills and approaches and in CAADP principles and processes. Graduates of the trainings, who call themselves CAADP Champions for Change or simply Champions for Food Security, are English and French speakers from 29 sub-Saharan countries. They work across a broad range of sectors: 34% from NGO's and civil society institutions, 36% from the public sector, 15% from the private sector, and 14% from university or research institutions. Although many Champions have college or post-graduate degrees and work in formal sector jobs, others have come to occupy important roles in their sub-national or national food systems without much formal education. It is noteworthy that early in the process of developing the leadership training, the term "leader" was jettisoned in favor of "Champion" given the negative connotations that the former is considered to have in Africa.

When the Africa Lead program began in 2010 the Bureau of Food Security asked Regional and local Missions and their African counterparts to identify mid-level professionals working in agriculture and food security to participate in a training program to develop leadership skills and knowledge relevant to moving the CAADP process forward at the national level. The objective in 2010 was to generate a pool of skilled food security Champions in each country who were informed about and committed to CAADP, and motivated to engage with their national governments around CAADP. The first wave of trainings, in a 5-day residential course called Module One, was held in Nairobi, Accra and Pretoria, where the Africa Lead regional offices were located. They drew participants from multiple countries and contained sessions focused on leadership skills for food security and CAADP. The exception was Uganda, where Module One trainings were held for Ugandans only. A sample agenda for the standard Module One program is provided below:

## SCALING UP FOR FOOD SECURITY IN AFRICA – COURSE SCHEDULE

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<p><b>Themes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* CAADP / FTF Frameworks</li> <li>* Status of Change in Food Security</li> <li>* Opportunities for Success</li> </ul>	<p><b>Themes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Leading and Managing Change</li> </ul>	<p><b>Theme:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Strategic Thinking &amp; Planning</li> <li>* Advocacy: Analyzing Stakeholders</li> </ul>	<p><b>Themes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Advocacy: Developing Messages</li> <li>* Leadership Skills for Change Initiatives</li> </ul>	<p><b>Themes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Capacity Needs Assessment</li> <li>* Monitoring and Evaluation</li> <li>* Creating Plans for Next Steps</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome and Introductions: Building the Team</li> <li>• Our Roles in Food Security (Rome, L'Aquila, CAADP &amp; FTF/ Guiding Principles)</li> <li>• <b>Lunch</b></li> <li>• Status of Food Security (Inclusive Approach-Gender, the Poor, Climate Change &amp; Nutrition)</li> <li>• Opportunities for Food Security Initiatives in Countries/Region</li> <li>• Individual Planning/ Journaling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of the Day /Homework</li> <li>• Overview of Leading &amp; Managing Change</li> <li>• Leading &amp; Managing Change – Step 1: Increase Urgency</li> <li>• Leading &amp; Managing Change – Step 2: Build the Guiding Team</li> <li>• <b>Lunch</b></li> <li>• Leading &amp; Managing Change – Step 3: Create A Compelling Vision</li> <li>• Individual Planning/ Journaling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of the Day/Homework</li> <li>• Strategic Thinking &amp; Planning</li> <li>• <b>Lunch</b></li> <li>• Strategic Thinking &amp; Planning (continued)</li> <li>• Advocacy: Analyzing Stakeholders in Food Security: Knowledge Positions</li> <li>• Individual Planning / Journaling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of the Day/Homework</li> <li>• Advocacy: Developing Messages with Impact</li> <li>• Individual Leadership Action Plan</li> <li>• <b>Lunch</b></li> <li>• Individual Change Leadership Action Plan</li> <li>• (continued)</li> <li>• Journaling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of the Day/Homework</li> <li>• Introduction to the Capacity Needs Assessment Approach</li> <li>• Basics of Monitoring and Evaluation</li> <li>• Country/Region Food Security Networking &amp; Collaboration Work Groups and Reports</li> <li>• Closing Session</li> </ul>
<p><b>Homework:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read <i>Leading Change</i> HBR Article</li> </ul>	<p><b>Homework:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Strategic Thinking &amp; Planning Section</li> </ul>	<p><b>Homework:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Leadership Practices Inventory</li> </ul>	<p><b>Homework:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Capacity Needs Assessment Materials</li> </ul>	<p><b>Homework:</b></p> <p>Be a CHAMPION OF CHANGE !</p>

Module One was followed by a second wave of 4-day residential trainings in a course called Module Two. Although there is some overlap in content between them, Module Two is more focused on management skills needed to implement and accelerate initiatives to transform agriculture and achieve food security at sub-national, national or regional levels. Module One is more focused on nurturing leaders who are motivated and able to spearhead policy change processes and agriculture transformation in their countries. Unlike Module One, most Module

Two trainings are held in the country of the local USAID Mission paying for the training and only include participants from a single country, single set of organizations or single institution, depending on the objective of the training. The exception to this is Module Two trainings paid for by the Regional Missions which target staff from regional institutions with roles in CAADP's four pillars or those key to facilitating regional economic integration. A sample agenda for the standard Module Two program is provided below:

### SAMPLE MODULE 2: AGENDA

Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four
<b>A.M.</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-Training Survey</li> <li>• <b>Session 1:</b> Introductions and Overview</li> <li>• <b>Session 2:</b> NAIP/RAIP Overview</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Session 5:</b> Project Management Overview (continued)</li> <li>• <b>Session 6:</b> NAIP/RAIP Support Mechanisms – Concurrent Tracks:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Track 1 – Strategic Influencing for Stakeholder Participation and Collaboration</li> <li>➤ Track 2 – Financial Management</li> <li>➤ Track 3 – Managing the Donor-Recipient Relationship</li> <li>➤ Track 4 – Managing People to Achieve Results</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Session 7:</b> Monitoring &amp; Evaluation for NAIP/RAIP Implementation (continued)</li> <li>• <b>Session 8:</b> Design and Implementation of Rapid Results Projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Session 9:</b> Action Planning for NAIP/RAIP Implementation (continued)</li> <li>• <b>Session 10:</b> Teambuilding – Success Factors for Effective Implementation</li> </ul>
<b>LUNCH – P.M.</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Session 3:</b> Success Stories in Agricultural Productivity – Characteristics of Effective Projects</li> <li>• <b>Session 4:</b> Project Management Overview</li> <li>• <b>Session 5:</b> Project Management Overview</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concurrent Tracks Continued</li> <li>• <b>Session 7:</b> Monitoring &amp; Evaluation for NAIP/RAIP Implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Session 8:</b> Design and Implementation of Rapid Results Projects (continued)</li> <li>• <b>Session 9:</b> Action Planning for NAIP/RAIP Implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Session 10:</b> Teambuilding – Success Factors for Effective Implementation (continued)</li> <li>• <b>Session 11:</b> Next Steps for the Group, Resources and Skill Development Needed</li> <li>• <b>Session 12:</b> Wrap Up and Closure</li> <li>• Post-Training Survey</li> </ul>

Most Module One trainings that have been provided by Africa Lead in East, Southern and West Africa occurred between January and July 2011. In September 2011 a simplified three-day Non-State Actor (NSA) Dialogue Platform training on CAADP and methods for engaging governments and stakeholders in policy dialogues was held for non-state actors (community-based, academic, media, private sector organizations) in several Africa Lead countries in East,



Southern and West Africa. Module Two trainings began in Tanzania in the summer of 2011 and in Ghana and Liberia in March/April of 2012. Since that time, East and West African Regional and local Missions have continued to submit buy-in orders for Africa Lead training workshops based on customized blends of the original Module One curriculum and the Module Two curriculum. Examples of customized trainings include adaptations of the Module One leadership training for high level Parliamentarians in Uganda and Government-to-Government Policy Dialogues developed to facilitate collaboration and coordination on policy formation and planning among ministries in Tanzania. The adaptability of Africa Lead's training curricula to cater to different audiences or training objectives depending on the strategic interests of the Mission buying in constitutes an important level of flexibility that allows Africa Lead to address widely different contexts at sub-national, national and regional levels with a relatively simple set of capacity building tools.

## **CAPACITY BUILDING FOR CAADP AT 10 YEARS**

In 2003, in Maputo, Mozambique, African Leaders endorsed CAADP as the action plan for putting agriculture back on Africa's development agenda. As CAADP approaches its 10th anniversary, enormous progress has been made by the African Union and NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development) establishing CAADP values and principles, an integrated four-pillar framework and roadmap to guide agriculture investment across the continent. As of March 2013, 30 countries have signed CAADP compacts and 22 have established peer-reviewed National Agriculture Investment Plans (NAIPs) with another 8 in progress. Now the challenge facing CAADP is to transform itself from a continental policy framework into tangible regional and country-level actions to implement regional integration and country level NAIPs, guided by the CAADP framework and core CAADP values and principles.

The 2008 NEPAD CAADP Country Implementation Guide provides a roadmap for the formation CAADP country teams to spearhead implementation of country level NAIPs. When the Africa Lead program began in October 2010, very few people in Africa knew about CAADP, making it difficult to build the country-level institutional architecture that the AU and NEPAD envisioned to carry forward with implementation of NAIPs. Africa Lead Task One trainings were designed to support CAADP's capacity building agenda by addressing this gap. In addition to providing technical content on CAADP and food security frameworks, Africa Lead also focuses on leadership and management skills needed to promote values and principles that are core to the CAADP framework. As stated by NEPAD (NEPAD 2008) CAADP principles, values and goals include:

- Building partnerships and alliances across ministries and sectors to include farmers, agribusiness and civil society is fundamental to the CAADP agenda, both as a core component and in acknowledging that agriculture is a crosscutting sector. The [CAADP] goal is to facilitate alignment of development efforts, raise participation of farmer organizations, the private sector, and other stakeholders in the policymaking process, and enable greater ease of access to technical expertise by players at all levels of the food system.
- Dialogue, transparency, peer review and mutual accountability among stakeholders going down to the local level, in order to encourage collective responsibility and inclusive participation in policy development.

- Practicing results-oriented management based on benchmarking, mutual evidence-based learning through monitoring and evaluation, and harmonization of development efforts.
- Exploitation of regional complementarities and cooperation to boost growth by addressing common mutual needs and regional comparative advantage. (NEPAD, 2008).

A key question for CAADP's capacity building agenda going forward is to identify the kinds of capacity building methodologies, strategies and targets needed to transform CAADP's values and principles into meaningful action at the regional and country level. What will it take to generate meaningful buy-in to CAADP values of inclusiveness, transparency, and accountability by a broad base of Africans? What will it take to shift knowledge, values and behaviors of coalitions or interest groups that are vested in the current status quo institutional and policy arrangements governing agriculture in their countries?

“Although growth rate and budget share are the two targets most often associated with CAADP, the value addition to countries from adoption of the framework is expected to come from absorbing its values and principles. According to NEPAD (2008) the ‘litmus test for success of the CAADP framework and agenda will be its influence on how development and economic investment plans are developed and implemented.’ One of the key objectives will be to improve the quality of planning and investments, with quality underpinned by the extent of consultation in their development. Additionally, NEPAD (2008) notes that an important aspect of CAADP's value added in terms of increasing the value of agriculture investment programs will come from fundamental institutional and policy changes in the implementation mechanisms. This emphasis on implementation was absent in earlier documents on CAADP.” (IFPRI 2010).

## **TRAINING METHODOLOGY FOR AFRICA LEAD TASK ONE**

Africa Lead Task One training workshops integrate technical content on CAADP and integrated food security frameworks with content on leadership skills, change management and managing for results. In Module One, practical tools for leadership and change management are based on the “Modeling the Way” methodology of Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner for leadership and John Kotter's world-renowned 8-step process for managing change. The “Modeling the Way” methodology emphasizes that leadership is not about personality but about behaviors. Five behaviors that Kouzes and Posner identify that exemplify great leadership are depicted below:

## The Leadership Challenge

### 5 Behaviors That Make a Difference

- Challenging the Process
- Inspiring a Shared Vision
- Enabling Others to Act
- Modeling the Way
- Encouraging the Heart

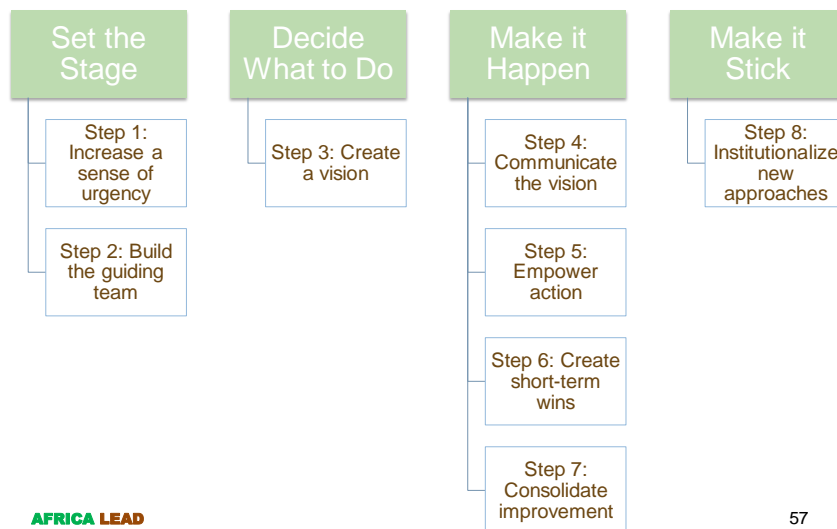


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John Kotter, in his eight-step process for leading change, emphasizes that change initiatives are very emotional processes and that the biggest challenge that leaders will face when leading change initiatives will be changing the behavior of people. The eight steps on his process for leading change are depicted below:

## Eight Steps to Leading Change



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Although John Kotter’s model for leading change and the Kouzes and Posner model for leadership behaviors are primary sources of content, workshop curricula also include a wealth of psychological tools and games designed to jolt participants out of habitual ways of seeing and perceiving the world and their roles in it. Examples include “The Roadblock,” “The Animal Game” and “Thinking Outside the Box.”



In Module Two, the primary focus is on managing for results and a primary methodology is the Rapid Results Institute’s Rapid Results Approach (RRA). The RRA is a simple but highly choreographed process whereby organizations (or operational units within organizations) develop rapid results initiatives (RRI) focused on achieving an ambitious goal in 60 to 120 days. The structure of the initiative is carried out in three acts – pre-launch, launch and implementation. Each act is designed to neutralize common systemic barriers to performance. The provision of coaching support during the implementation phase is an important part of the RRA concept. The three unique elements of a rapid results initiative are depicted in the visual

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## Three Unique Elements of An RRI

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- 1) Ambitious but realistic goals
  - Goals that can only be achieved through innovation versus “just by working harder”
- 2) Encouraging innovation from below
  - Front-line workers create their own action plans
  - Experimentation is encouraged
- 3) Coaching Support - Specially trained facilitators
  - Help teams think creatively
  - Help strengthen team work

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below:

Task One’s highly participatory pedagogy incorporates current understanding of best practices for adult learning, highlighting ways that mature adult learners differ from younger learners. Adults have strong egos and extensive depth of experience to share. They also have a variety of learning styles, including visual, auditory and kinesthetic. Each workshop session includes elements catering to each learning style with breakouts for small groups to interact, share and relate content to their own life experience. Great care was taken in both East and West Africa on selection of facilitators for the workshops. Only those sensitive and responsive to body language and affect of participants, who asked open-ended questions to bring out and engage

participants, and who understood the material on a technical level were hired. Africa Lead staff training coordinators, who also attended trainings, provided ongoing feedback to the facilitators, so within a short time they were exceptionally skilled in establishing a warm safe environment and encouraging participation. Most Module One workshops were residential and participants were actively encouraged to engage with one another and to expand their professional networks.

Africa Lead staff training coordinators and facilitators were all Africans from the regions where workshops were being held. During the training-of-trainer sessions prior to the launch of the first workshops in January 2010, they made a seminal decision to modify the workshop modules by incorporating uniquely African elements. In order to help workshop participants experience a direct, personal and emotional link to the concept of food insecurity, they incorporated an image of a broken clay grain pot as a major visual motif throughout the five-day training. “The Broken Pot” became a potent symbol freighted with layers of meaning, much in the way religious symbols function. It focused participants’ minds and opened their hearts to the core tragedy of Africans unable to feed themselves. This in turn became the jumping off point for discussions on causes of the failure and how to change the situation.

Conversely, the “unbroken” African pot became a symbol of food security success. During course deliveries, participants or small groups who made significant contributions to the learning process – for example, by sharing a particularly insightful idea or providing a helpful summary – were invited to come before the group to “feed” the unbroken African pot with a handful of seeds or grain.

In addition to the broken pot, the African trainers incorporated the story of a little girl who suffers from malnutrition, using a photographic image. Like the broken pot, the little girl was a non-conceptual entry point that broke down participants’ “professional” role identities and got them relating on a personal and intimate level, by really thinking through the effects that poverty, nutrition, gender and climate change would have on her story. The little girl opened participants to their own stories and histories and to the reality of food insecurity in their countries.

In addition to symbols and stories that opened participants’ hearts to the tragedy and urgency of food insecurity and hunger in their countries, the workshop incorporated *aspirational* stories that provided living examples of extraordinary impacts individuals can make. Several Champions mentioned these aspirational models as important to their transformation into Champions, challenging themselves with the thought that if that person can do it, so can I.

The third crucial innovation was the decision to conduct trainings using African vernacular English instead of “university English” and to lace discussions of technical content with African proverbs and stories to illustrate and bring home points.

## **TRANSFORMATIVE TRAINING: AN INNOVATION FOR AFRICAN AGRICULTURE**

Many people involved with Africa Lead, including the Deputy Chiefs of Party (DCOPs), staff training coordinators and workshop facilitators described the Task One workshops as transformative. The source and definition of Africa Lead’s transformative pedagogy was provided in an interview with Dr. John Azu, staff training coordinator for West Africa.

“Right at the onset, the designers of the program decided to go with transformational change. That underpinned the design of the training itself. For transformational change, they referred us to Kotter’s work, which simply stated says you can teach people all the principles and practices for creating and managing change. However, he added one component which brought about that transformational power, and that is the feeling part of it, not the intellectual part. We can read about change management as intellectual discourses, but nothing happens, because feeling is what generates the compassion, the desire to change. Emotion brings life, action and power to the thought that is conveyed. When you mix emotions with the thoughts you are conveying, it suddenly becomes part of the person. That’s when transformation occurs. Those who went through this training and who understood it, got transformed within themselves. It doesn’t wear out, how can it? It becomes part of your thinking, part of the working equipment of your mind.” (Dr. John Azu)

The transformative impact of the trainings described by Dr. Azu was amply corroborated by testimony from the Lessons Learned research. During the research, we probed whether this is an innovation in pedagogy for African agriculture. The transformative impact of the workshops does appear to be an innovation that results from a combination of the “Africanized” presentation, and use of symbols, games and stories to generate a direct emotional connection to and sense of urgency about the issue of food insecurity in workshop participants.

The facilitators for East Africa all have significant depth of experience facilitating training workshops in a wide variety of contexts. In a key informant interview with them we generated a rough classification of training workshops based on their combined years of practice. All workshops contain “technical” content, from obviously technical to less obviously technical subjects, such as human resource management. Out of all trainings they had participated in, in roughly 80% the content was delivered didactically and in 20% the content was delivered using participatory methodologies. But even the participatory workshops maintained a distance between the feelings of the participants and the technical material being presented.

Africa Lead workshops were the first time these facilitators consciously strove, as one of them put it, “to build and work with the emotional energies of the participants” as an essential part of the methodology. The idea to integrate emotional urgency into the methodology comes from the first of Kotter’s 8-step change management process, which is to create a sense of personal urgency and responsibility about the topic that is the focus of change. The need to engage people emotionally in order to engender urgency for change in the context of African food security was eloquently expressed by a Tanzanian Champion:

“Leadership training that addresses peoples’ heart is important. People have to be touched. You have to wake up those sleeping emotions. The challenge is to reach deep into the heart to give us a bit of a shock. So that we realize that no matter how small we are, we do have an important role, and if we don’t perform it, the system fails.”  
(Tanzania R13 advisor to high political office)

The few Champions in the Lessons Learned sample who had been on *internships* (Task Two) were very appreciative of the opportunity to further build their professional skills. In Tanzania and Uganda, the ability to offer internships or other career enhancing opportunities for practical training, on fairly short notice, was something both Missions valued highly about the Africa Lead

program. USAID points of contact interviewed for the Lessons Learned research said that this flexibility allows them to take advantage of unanticipated opportunities to build the skills of food system leaders in their countries. Also, because public sector leaders value the internships, the Missions' capacity to offer them helps improve the receptivity of government leaders to other aspects of Africa Lead.

Under Task Three, Africa Lead conducts institutional mapping and assessments as a diagnostic to help Missions decide where to target investments in capacity building and what kind of capacity building modality to use. Missions have used Task Three for institutional mapping and assessments followed by customized Module Two trainings for a specific organization based on the assessment. While this is a valid approach, the Lessons Learned research suggests that *also* targeting leaders of these organizations for Module One leadership training will increase the sustainability and impact of customized Module Two management trainings for mid-level staff.

## **JUSTIFICATION FOR A QUALITATIVE LESSONS LEARNED DISCOVERY PROCESS**

As Africa Lead moved into its second year USAID Africa/Sustainable Development saw the need to document lessons learned on best practices in relation to the learning and capacity building modalities piloted by Task One in order to inform future USAID programs. Although leadership training has long been used by organizations to improve efficacy or gain an innovative edge, its application as a capacity building tool for mid- and senior-level agriculture professionals in Africa is relatively new. Prior to Africa Lead, the two best-known examples were the African Women Leaders in Agriculture and Environment and the African Women in Agriculture Research and Development, both "Cadillac" programs with high costs per beneficiary.

Applying relatively low cost short-course leadership trainings across a whole continental sector, with the goal of accelerating country level implementation of CAADP principles and NAIPs is an innovation piloted by the Africa Lead program. If effective in building awareness of CAADP, energizing new leadership for food security, and building commitment to CAADP values and principles and skills to implement actions based on them, the leadership methodology piloted by Africa Lead could be an important addition to the capacity building tool box for agriculture in Africa, irrespective of whether or not CAADP itself is the strategic focus of trainings.

Africa Lead established a results framework and project monitoring plan which uses pre- and post-training workshop surveys, six-month post-training surveys administered via Internet, and success stories to monitor impacts on Champions' knowledge, individual behavior and wider environments as a result of their participation in Task One training workshops. However, in order to document lessons learned and best practices for USAID Missions going forward, a more in-depth discovery process with Champions and other stakeholders was necessary.

The Lessons Learned research contributes to the evidence base on capacity building for African agriculture by looking at the efficacy of transformative leadership and management training for instilling CAADP values and principles in mid- and senior-level Africans. What do the Champions who took the trainings have to say about the efficacy and importance of this approach for their own lives, organizations and the wider "institutional ecologies" in which they

operate? What are their further observations on the relevance of CAADP to food systems transformation in their own national contexts? Of primary concern was to understand Champions' perceptions on the usefulness and importance of Africa Lead's Task One methodology, as well as best practices. Another concern was to get feedback from Champions on promising strategies to support their continuing evolution as food security Champions, as well as promising strategies to accelerate transition to new attitudes and behaviors aligned with CAADP values throughout key agriculture and food security networks in their countries.

## **THEORY OF CHANGE AND NON-TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION**

The theory of change behind Africa Lead Task One leadership and management training is that:

- 5-day transformative leadership and 4-day management training courses change knowledge, attitudes, motivation and behavior of individual participants
- Individuals with changed knowledge, attitudes, motivation and behavior become change agents within their organizations and networks
- As individuals, organizations and networks change, behaviors in wider inter-personal and institutional networks that influence key food system processes also begin to change.

The assumption underlying the theory of change is that individual level “factors” related to knowledge gaps, attitudes, motivation and behavior influence ways in which wider systems function, for better or worse. Discussions of such “non-technical factors” came up repeatedly in key informant interviews with respondents as a major motif of the Lessons Learned discovery process, referred to by Champions as “mind-sets” that stand in the way of progress. Here we use “*non-technical barriers to food systems transformation*” to refer to such factors. For example: attitudes about authority suppress individual initiative and hence the capacity of the system as a whole to respond to and benefit from innovation that comes from within. In the words of a Ghanaian Champions:

“That is the major problem we have in Africa. Our system is to respect authority. And the system is such that unless you reach a certain level, you cannot even talk, or if you talk, people will not listen. People have the intellect, they have ideas, but the system has made them shut up. It is holding us back, not only in Ghana, but in the whole of Africa. You can only build strong institutions when the individuals are empowered to come up with strong ideas. But our system is such that until you reach a certain level you cannot even talk. It kills initiative.” (Ghana R1 national government)

In spite of being CAADP signatories and having peer reviewed NAIPs, many countries still have unfavorable policy environments for agriculture growth and food security and limited capacity to harness private sector financing to catalyze agriculture sector growth. They lack institutions or institutional processes capable of transparent, inclusive and accountable allocation of agriculture sector investments. Africa Lead Task One trainings built capacity and commitment of actors within the food system to mobilize across sectors to address these problems by building a new sense of moral urgency about food insecurity, new understanding that agriculture is a system that requires collaboration across all segments of society, improved policy literacy, new models of leadership, new attitudes about information sharing and collaboration, new models of



evidence based advocacy to advance policy dialogue with governments, and perhaps most importantly, a new sense of empowerment and ownership that Africa's food problems can be solved by relatively ordinary Africans like themselves.

## **HYPOTHESES GUIDING LESSONS LEARNED DISCOVERY PROCESS**

Two hypotheses were explored in key informant interviews with Champions and also guided the content analysis stage that followed the fieldwork.

- H1: Non-technical factors related to individuals' knowledge, attitudes, motivation and behavior function as barriers to food systems transformation.
- H2: Leadership and management trainings change knowledge, attitudes, motivation and behaviors of individuals in ways that mitigate barriers to food systems transformation.

## **ANSWERING THE “SO WHAT?” QUESTION**

The so-what question lies in two parts. First, are non-technical barriers important enough to invest in changing? If aligning the values of actors and stakeholders in African food systems with CAADP values is a priority, then transformative leadership and management training is worth investing in if it effectively aligns individual values with those of CAADP.

The second “so what?” question relates to scale needed for impact. How many CAADP Champions for Food Security need to be trained to have an impact on national and regional institutions and policy development processes? Although this question cannot be answered on the basis of a qualitative study such as this, several of the Champions who were interviewed made practical suggestions on how to target transformative leadership training to maximize the wider impacts in their countries. They also offered suggestions for post-training follow-up activities to further amplify the impacts of the Champions who have been trained.



# Part Two

## Methodology

### COUNTRY STUDIES AND INFORMANTS

Interviews were conducted in Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda in July 2012, and Zambia and Zimbabwe, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Senegal in August 2012. These countries were selected because their USAID Missions provided the preponderance of Task One beneficiaries. The final Lessons Learned sample included 48 Task One and NSA Champions from East, 17 from Southern and 51 from West Africa. Approximately two-thirds of the Lessons Learned sample were men; ~14% were younger than 35 years of age, ~ 61% were between 35 and 50 years of age, and ~ 25% were older than 50 years of age. Although most respondents were from national or sub-national organizations, six worked for regional organizations. In addition to Champions, five Africans familiar with the program who had not taken trainings were interviewed, as were Africa Lead's regional DCOPs, staff training coordinators and Task One trainers. USAID staff from the East Africa Regional Mission and seven country Missions (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Senegal) were also interviewed.

### SAMPLE SELECTION AND DESCRIPTION

The research sample was selected by Africa Lead's training coordinators and M&E officers in East and West Africa. They used informant matrix mapping to set up a sampling frame for each of the ten country studies. The sampling frames clustered training beneficiaries by sector (government/public sector, NGO, research and universities, and private sector) and by type of training. Purposive selection of respondents was based on the sampling frames to ensure that the final sample included all the different categories of actors and perspectives of Africans involved with the program. Approximately 28% of respondents were from public sector agencies, 28% from NGOs, 16% were from research organizations and universities, and 28% were from the private sector. 87% of the respondents participated in Module One trainings, 22% participated in NSA workshops and 13% participated in Module Two trainings. Several of the respondents who attended NSA workshops or Module Two trainings also attended Module One, so were able to compare them. In addition to 116 Task One Champions, 4 interviews were conducted with individuals (from Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Liberia respectively) who had gone on internships sponsored under Task Two.

In all ten country studies knowledge of CAADP before the training was inconsistent across respondents. For most of them Africa Lead was an important opportunity to learn about CAADP for the first time or to deepen superficial acquaintance with the framework. Less than a third of the respondents described themselves as somewhat or highly knowledgeable about CAADP prior to the trainings, and many of them were linked to Ministries of Agriculture CAADP working groups or had been involved in their countries' CAADP roundtable process.

In most of the countries almost all Task One Champions asked to participate in the Lessons Learned study agreed. Logistics constraints meant that most interviews were conducted in the capitals of the 10 countries. (Except for Ghana, where interviews were also held in Tamale.) In several countries respondents travelled considerable distances at their own expense for their

interview, and Africa Lead staff also took advantage of Champions who were coming to the capital for other reasons to schedule interviews. Both of these strategies minimized potential bias introduced into the sample by conducting interviews in the capital.

## **KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS**

Key informant interviews were based on a standard, open-ended topic guide and list of probe questions generated through discussions on the priority learning agenda with US and Africa-based Africa Lead staff and other stakeholders prior to the fieldwork. During the interviews, which took from one to three hours, Champions discussed their experiences of the Africa Lead trainings and the impact the trainings have had on their lives and work. For most respondents the interview provided a rare opportunity to reflect on an important development program, and they took it very seriously. They discussed how Africa Lead Task One trainings compared to other trainings they had taken; which aspects were important to them and why; if and how the trainings had changed their knowledge, beliefs, attitudes or behaviors; what they did post-training and the extent to which it was influenced by their experience of Africa Lead; recommendations to improve and build on Africa Lead going forward; and more general reflections on capacity building for agriculture and on the relevance of CAADP to their national agriculture agendas.

All ten country studies were conducted by Dr. Katharine Coon and Nega Bechera (Winrock International technical advisor and MSI monitoring and evaluation specialist) using the standard topic guide. Coon and Bechera conducted the first two country studies (Kenya and Tanzania) together in order to standardize their approach to the interviews. After that, Coon conducted the Uganda, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Senegal country studies, while Bechera conducted Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and Zambia. Africa Lead's M&E officer for East Africa (Rosemary Kagunda) participated in the interviews conducted in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

## **DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS**

Before starting interviews the purpose and scope of the study and the contents of the topic guide were explained to respondents. Respondents were then asked for permission to record and transcribe their interview so what they said could factor into the findings of the study. At the same time, respondents were assured that their anonymity would be maintained by delinking their names from any reports of the findings. For the most part, organizations have not been named either, with three exceptions where naming the organization significantly improves the readers appreciation of the findings, and where the findings were not sensitive. Most respondents agreed to have their interviews recorded and interviews took from one to three hours to conduct. Interviews were transcribed in Nairobi and Accra. Transcripts range from less than 30 to over 70 pages, with the majority between 30 – 50 pages in length.

Analysis of the transcripts was conducted by Africa Lead Washington D.C. based staff including David Tardif-Douglin, Gathoni Mungai, Melanie Beth Oliviero and Katharine Coon. Each one analyzed transcripts from two – three country studies. For each transcript, they identified themes in the responses organized by the main sections of the topic guide, and then clustered the themes across respondents for each of the country study. Katharine Coon synthesized the country analyses into the main synthesis report, which is also informed by her first-hand participation in the majority of the country studies and interviews. Quotes from transcripts that

are used in the report are identified by country, a respondent number and the sector from which the respondent comes (Ghana R1 national government). This provides basic context for understanding the observations and perspectives of the Champions while also preserving their anonymity. Two regional organizations (Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA) headquartered in Entebbe, Uganda and East Africa Grain Council (EAGC) headquartered in Nairobi, Uganda), and one national association (National Association of Poultry Farmers (NAPF) in Ghana) have been identified by name in quotes and case studies presented in Part Three, since all had multiple Champions, and the specific individual participating in the interview is not named.

## LEVEL OF ANALYSIS AND FOCUS OF REPORT

The focus of this report is on Africa Lead's Task One leadership and management trainings, and not on elements of the other three tasks. There were several reasons for restricting the report's focus in this way. First, as of July and August 2012 when the Lessons Learned research was being conducted, only 52 individuals had gone on internships sponsored by Africa Lead; of these, four were interviewed for the Lessons Learned research. This represents too few to assess the internship program or to contrast internships to leadership and management trainings in terms of impact. The same is true of the institutional assessments and tailored capacity building implemented by the Africa Lead program in West Africa. While acknowledging that this is an important and innovative use of Africa Lead tasks, assessing its impact on institutional performance was outside the scope or methodology of the Lessons Learned research.

Within Task One, the level of analysis presented in the main synthesis report is continent-wide. In other words, the report focuses on findings about the impacts of transformational leadership and management training on *individuals* that were common across the country studies. Of course, there is variance among individuals in how they responded to the trainings, with some more intensely transformed and mobilized than others. But *variance in how Champions responded to the training, in terms of its impact on them as human beings, appears to be more related to differences in personality or character than to differences in the sector or country the Champions came from.*

While this report focuses on individual level findings common across countries, each country study also had unique themes common to interviews with that country's Champions; and likewise there were perspectives that appear to have been characteristic of Champions from different sectors. This type of inter-country and inter-sector variance came out more in the kinds of goals and actions Champions engaged in post-training, than in how they actually responded to the training itself. In terms of this report, between country or between sector differences are mostly touched on in Part Four, which deals with recommendations for follow-on's to Africa Lead.

Findings are brought to life with illustrative quotes and stories that express sentiments or ideas common to Champions irrespective of country. Although illustrative quotes and stories are drawn mainly from Ghana, Liberia, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, nine of the ten country studies have been analyzed and the findings presented here are reflective of all nine. Ethiopian interviews were conducted in Amharic, which has prevented their inclusion in this report.

Findings from key informant interviews are presented in the two sections that follow. These are organized around

- Part Three: Champions' responses to questions about Africa Lead Task One
- Part Four: Champions' recommendations for Africa Lead going forward

Part Three presents analysis of Champions' *responses* to questions about their experiences of the leadership and management training workshops. The goal of the analysis was to identify what the Champions themselves have to say about best practices piloted by Africa Lead, as well as about possible impact pathways linking the trainings to changes in their attitudes and values. The last section of Part Three is comprised of illustrative case studies that explore different ways Champions applied transformative leadership and management training in their work.

Part Four presents Champions' feedback on ways to improve Task One training methodologies, and also *recommendations* for Africa Lead going forward – including what next for leadership and management training and what next for Champions and Champions networks.

# Part Three

## Champions' Responses to Questions About Africa Lead Task One

### MOTIVATION TO TAKE TRAININGS

Through consultation with USAID Missions, other projects and peers, Africa Lead asked for suggestions on outstanding people who have capacity for leadership to invite to participate in trainings. In this way, Africa Lead attempted to apply a selection filter that would only accept individuals with strong leadership potential to participate. In East Africa the invitation letter for the workshops was very clear about the purpose of the training: to build a cadre of leaders with knowledge of the CAADP framework able to drive the agriculture agenda forward. In West Africa Champions were asked filled out a form stating what they hoped to contribute as food security Champions based on what they learned. The filter process appears to have been somewhat successful in that many of the Champions interviewed were clearly excited by the chance to learn about CAADP, to become part of a cadre of leaders for food security, and to develop high order skills tailored to issues in food security and agriculture that they grapple with in their work.

The following quotes from Kenya, Uganda and Ghana are illustrative.

“The invitation letter was very clear about the purpose, which was to focus on regional agriculture and on the linkage with the CAADP process. And it was also very clear about targeting people who can really drive the agriculture agenda forward. So when I got this invitation I was excited and felt it was a good investment of my time. It is a decision which I don't regret.” (Kenya R3 local NGO)

“What really inspired me was what it aimed to achieve – linking us to CAADP. For me this was a first because [before the training] I would say as an organization we have not had any link to CAADP” (Kenya R2 regional trade facilitation organization)

“Based on subjects that were taught at the training I was eager to attend because I thought the training would improve me in my day-to-day activities in the institute. How to form teams, strategic thinking, preparing for change within an establishment...leadership qualities, basically. I was also excited by the opportunity to learn about CAADP and to build my leadership skills to advance food security in Ghana.” (Ghana R2 national research organization)

“When I saw the content and goal of the training, I realized that I am a leader. In the work I do in HIV we are promoting nutrition, so I realized the training would be very useful to me and to the church.” (Uganda R9 church leader)

“We realized we need to engage government on certain policies in order to improve the poultry sector in our country and we were not finding our way. Things were not clear to us. So we decided to take this opportunity to learn how to engage with the government, to learn how to educate the government what the poultry business is all about. So I

attended [for my organization] and it has been very useful.” (Ghana R10 national farmer-based organization)

All three Africa Lead offices asked known food security leaders to identify participants for Task One workshops. In EA a respondent in this position described his motivation to nominate others for the trainings based on his belief that the transformative methodology has potential to revolutionize agriculture in his country.

“I was in an instrumental position in that [I was asked to recruit trainees from outside Kenya]... Being [based] in Nairobi, I was fortunate to know what the Champions trainings were about. So I made sure a lot of Tanzanians came. Because we have challenges in our agriculture, despite having a lot of land, a lot of potential, we are not doing well. So I wanted a lot of people [from Tanzania] to participate in order to revolutionize agriculture in Tanzania. What I can say briefly is that the training was quite inspirational.” (Tanzania R1 regional organization then U.N. agency)

Although most Champions participated in Africa Lead workshops by choice and met the criteria the program was seeking, a significant minority attended because Africa Lead contacted the heads of their organizations and they were selected to attend by their boss. Although there are examples of this from all four sectors, it was more frequent among Champions recruited from government ministries and large NGOs with frequent donor contact. Even so, many who were “told” to attend were affected by the training in significant and positive ways. In one of the more perceptive and thoughtful interviews, a government Champion from Ghana discussed why his agency sent him to the Africa Lead training.

“Human resources is concerned about the role (my ministry) will play connecting with Agriculture to alleviate poverty and food insecurity. They sent me to prepare me to liaise with Agriculture. In fact, the whole thing is about food security, so cross-cutting linking is important. On paper Ministry of Finance, Agriculture and Ministry of Trade and Industry are supposed to coordinate very closely. But in reality we miss the linkages. We do not communicate or coordinate, so we miss each other’s priorities. Africa Lead gave a place and taught skills to connect with each other.” (Ghana R1 national government)

## **BEST PRACTICES IDENTIFIED BY CHAMPIONS**

Champions’ responses to questions about the most significant or memorable aspects of the training workshops were mostly consistent across all the country studies. The points distilled from the interviews reflect their feedback on “*best practices*” and are:

- Residential nature of training
- Diversity of participants
- Use of symbols, stories and games
- Holistic, multi-disciplinary approach to content
- Use of African vernacular
- Pragmatic and action-oriented



- High quality of the facilitators and facilitation

## **Residential Nature of Training**

The residential design gave Champions a chance to focus on the workshop content without being distracted by their regular roles and duties, which also facilitated opening up to their emotions over the course of the training. The fact that it was residential also meant participants spent time in the evening socializing, which was mentioned as important for building trust and forging bonds with each other.

## **Diversity of Participants**

**Regional Diversity.** Champions from all four sectors valued the regional diversity of their cohorts because it gave them a chance to learn about what is happening in other countries, compare challenges and forge bonds with other leaders and/or potential business partners across their regions. This was key to building the ability of Champions to move beyond local contexts to think and function as regional food systems actors.

**Diversity in Sector and Expertise.** The diversity of Champions from different sectors (private, NGO, research and universities, and public) was also cited as an important aspect of the trainings. Even within the public sector, the training sought to include people from different Ministries so they could each identify their roles. Spending time in workshops with people whom they may not have otherwise met helped Champions learn about value chains and understand perspectives other than their own. This was key in a range of outcomes including better understanding of the systems nature of agriculture and food security, improved policy and economic literacy, and enhanced ability of Champions to communicate, to network and to engage with a wider range of food systems actors than before.

**Diversity in Statuses.** Diversity of participants' statuses based on age, education and role authority was cited by Champions in Ghana and Senegal as an important part of their experience, although there is evidence it was important everywhere. Being able to interact freely and openly with people of different ages and role statuses in a safe environment, where everyone is treated with the same respect, seems to have had an important psychological impact linked to the heightened sense of empowerment and courage Champions attributed to the training.

## **Use of Symbols, Stories and Games**

The visual images, stories and games used by Africa Lead functioned like traditional or religious proverbs, providing non-conceptual mental maps that helped workshop participants internalize new ways of seeing the world and new attitudes at a very deep level. Champions' narratives suggest that this was a key factor in the transformational impact of their experience. The unconventional pedagogy created a sense of personal identification and urgency, opened Champions' minds and motivated them to take in and absorb the content at a deep, transformative level. It was key to generating the motivational energy and drive to act as Champions once the trainings had ended. The overall impact of transformative pedagogy was captured by a Ghanaian Champion:

“We did so many exercises that helped us to know we can't stay where we are, but need to stretch, move ahead, extend to other areas, and to help us know how to link up and

partner with each other to get more out of our efforts. So Africa Lead is an eye opener, encouraging us to share ideas to see how we can best increase our production and food security.” (Ghana R9 farmer-based organization)

Although a majority of the 116 Champions interviews reflect impacts of transformative methods, there was significant variation in which image, story, metaphor or game different Champions remembered. Given diversity of learning styles among adults, inclusion of a rich and varied set of transformative methods may be an important factor in the workshops’ overall impact. The combination of transformative methods working together may also be needed since different techniques embedded in different modules target unconscious attitudes or beliefs related to that module.

The following quotes from Uganda and Ghana illustrate how different Champions interpret the broken pot differently, based on their contexts. Yet within this diversity of interpretation and use, the symbol itself serves as a reminder that the common goal of everyone’s effort is to end food insecurity in their country, and that in order for this to happen, everyone needs to pull together.

“The training was a great experience that we went through. But above all there was this lesson about mending a broken pot. It led us to really analyze gaps in our research program. That session on mending the broken pot actually strengthened our resolve to work in a value chain way. In fact, when we came back we saw ourselves really emphasizing the value chain so now we go from laboratory to the consumer.” (Uganda R11 regional research organization)

“I remember that broken pot very well. I look at it this way. In Ghana what we need to be food secure is in place, but it is a bit shattered. Working through people and bringing our acts together can help us piece things together. We have the resources. That’s why I said the people aspect is very crucial, because we are the ones who have to make things stick.” (Ghana R5 government)

“We have to look at increasing our production, getting more to eat and then not having an empty pot. I always use the pot which is not leaking [in her motivational meetings with women farmers]. Now all the food is leaking and the pot is getting empty, but we need to close it so we can get more production in the pot.” (Ghana R9 farmer-based organization)

An important finding on the transformative pedagogy is the way transformative elements have stuck with Champions, continuing to resurface in their minds 12 to 18 months after they took the workshop. The illustrative quotes showing how this worked are from the Ghana case study. The following is from a discussion of the “little girl” by a woman with an academic degree in gender.

“Those metaphors, I don’t remember them all, but the little girl is the one that has stuck in my mind and made me think. It has impacted my approach to issues I just talked about, gender, climate change and nutrition. You know, I saw that little girl as the embodiment of these three concepts. Malnutrition has affected her life, and climate change will make it worse. She has impacted my approach to the programs we do. We are not a gender advocacy organization. But now I always make sure I highlight women. It’s not that I didn’t know of these things before, because my master’s focus was gender and development. But I didn’t think about it much until after [the Africa Lead workshop]

because what I did was academic. I know I have seen children who are not well fed; when we go out to the farms they are there. But we never give them any thought. It takes something to make you sit back and say “Really, I think this is it.” We talked at length about that little girl, and I remember during the discussion I became very emotional about it, because I was looking at.. [emotional moment; respondent did not finish sentence]. We talked about how the girl would be in years to come if she is not well fed. Africa Lead turned it from being an academic thing to a hard thing. It’s not academic anymore.” (Ghana R6 farmer-based organization)

Games also triggered powerful “Aa Ha” moments that shifted Champions into new ways of perceiving, experiencing and thinking about leadership and teamwork. The following quotes from Ghana illustrate the importance of games in triggering this kind of insight, even among highly educated people.

*“Did Africa Lead give you skills you did not have before?”* “It really did, especially the module about teamwork. In fact, there was one game during the training [Roadblock]. At first people got confused, but in the end they said ‘Oh, we did not understand, but now we do.’ In Roadblock a leader will emerge and be pushing people around. Sometimes he doesn’t know his left from his right and he insists do it this way, do it that, but its failing. Then you see someone who is quiet, but he is looking at how to unravel the whole thing, so by the time he speaks he gets the answer. There are people who are forward, that is their life; that is how they speak. Others take their time before they speak. So you have to know the different types and how to manage them.” (Ghana R1 national government)

“We did an exercise on the roadblock. And I got to know what planning can do, what teamwork can do. So the first thing I did when I came home, the first thing I did in my office, and it has come to stay, is that I said every Monday head of all of the departments will have a team meeting and plan together. And it has helped a lot.” (Ghana R12 microfinance/NGO)

Another Ghanaian Champion, this one with a Ph.D., used the phrase “thinking outside the box” dozens of times during his interview to describe changes in his thinking and behavior brought about by Africa Lead that he linked to a game played at the training.

“Before the training I was not going out of my way. But the training empowered me to do more because we were taught to think outside the box.... Thinking outside the box. We were given nine dots on a piece of paper which you form a straight line without crossing. And it was interesting, because a lot of us couldn’t do it. I have brought it back to my colleagues and I have yet to find someone who can do it. This is something that always comes back to me, thinking outside the box.” (Ghana R2 national research organization)

### **Holistic, Multi-Disciplinary Approach to Content**

The holistic, multi-disciplinary approach to workshop content was new and very important to many of the Champions who were interviewed. It combined content on CAADP and food security with content on leadership, change management, and managing for results in ways that helped participants deepen their understanding of the CAADP framework as an interdependent system made up of multiple stakeholders with different concerns and perspectives. At the same

time it has given them skills needed to move their own professional behavior into alignment with CAADP principles and values. Several Champions were already at the cutting edge in their different contexts, for example through work on value chain methodologies, trying to establish multi-disciplinary approaches within research organizations, or trying to improve collaboration between government ministries or between government and non-state actors. The workshop boosted their confidence as change agents since it deepened their understanding of the CAADP framework and how their own work fits into it. At the same time it has given them practical skills to take action based on CAADP principles.

“One of the things this training got right, it was holistic. For the first time we had a deep understanding of CAADP. Even though we have been working with CAADP, it was our first opportunity to really discuss what it represents and what it means for us as Champions within our own work. At the same time the training taught us leadership and new methods for working together.” (Uganda R11 regional research organization)

One of the main findings from the Lessons Learned research is the high value Champions placed on the opportunity to learn practical leadership and management skills. Elements from Kouzes’ and Posner’s leadership model, the Kotter model for managing change, and the Rapid Results Institute’s 100-day methods were all important takeaways, *especially methods for active listening and leading by example, team building, stakeholder analysis, evidence based advocacy and managing for transparency and results.*

“The Kotter approach was a major takeaway, because after the second day, I realized this is what we need to engage government. You know, the steps, how to even encourage ordinary people around us. So when we started going on air [in a lobbying campaign inspired by Africa Lead] we were telling all the farmers you matter, you are part of us, you need to be with us. And with the Rapid Results we are now mobilizing our members. Everything has completely shifted; it’s completely opened up. And it’s all because of this program [Africa Lead]. We’ve been able to know exactly how to talk to them [government, farmers, the private sector], the messages to send out. And people are listening.” (Ghana R10 farmer-based organization)

The following Champion referred to the practical leadership and management methods taught as “soft skills,” and highlighted how essential she feels they are in order to motivate people to go beyond theory to action.

“I realized with [Africa Lead] there are also the soft skills aspects that come in [along with technical content]. I benefited a lot from people management, conflict management, especially the Thomas-Kilmann Instrument [model for handling conflict]. That has really helped us bond. I emphasize soft skills because you can have all the theory, but it’s people who do the implementation and we all have our challenges. So it’s very important [for managers and leader] to know how to get the best out of people so they can commit and work as a team. That’s why the people aspect is very, very crucial. Knowledge rests within individuals, but you need to be able to elicit that response to get things going. We can read all the theory but it won’t mean anything. It takes a common goal.” (Ghana R5 national government)

Discussions of leadership or management methods were often linked to each other and to other elements of the training. For example, learning to manage for results was linked to changes in the sense of urgency to address food insecurity, and to changes in ways participants thought about time. Exercises that helped Champions learn to value diverse personalities and perspectives were linked to new norms of leadership emphasizing active listening and personal responsibility for modeling ethical standards and altruism. Both were linked to changes in how Champions experienced themselves away from isolated actors unconnected to a broader system, to experiencing themselves as part of a bigger system where everyone needs to pull together to end food insecurity. Shifts from silo to systems thinking were linked to CAADP. When Champions grasped the CAADP framework they also understood why they needed inclusive, transparent and accountable leadership and management to bridge the gap between the theory of CAADP and practice on the ground.

The following section quoted from an interview with a Tanzanian Champion is illustrative of how the themes of urgency, shifts in values, and learning about CAADP work together in a synergistic way to shift Champions' views, values and behavior.

*“Did anything about the training especially influence you?”* “I think the poor girl and the broken pot, because this is a common situation in our place, a number of people are in the condition of the poor girl, so I remember that very much.” *“Could you say how that has influenced you?”* “I can say it has influenced me in trying to do hard work and take responsibility, because I understand the need to change.” *“Would you say your work has changed since the training?”* “Yes. I work harder because if I reflect on the CAADP pillars, I see the meaning of it and I see the need to work on those pillars. They [the four pillars] actually display the work I need to do.” *“Before the training did you connect your work to food security?”* “Yes, but before the training it was not organized, not clear. The training on CAADP has given me a reference, where I can connect my work with the initiatives being undertaken by my country. I can see which part I’m falling in. Before the training it was difficult for me to know that what I do is important, but with [CAADP] I have the reference now.” (Tanzania R12 sub-national government)

An important consequence of the shift from silo to systems has to do with new awareness of the importance of human nutrition on the part of many Champions, who had really never thought of this as part of food security before. For example, for some years prior to the trainings, ASARECA had been moving towards a value chain approach in putting together multi-disciplinary research teams for different crop value chains. Although lip service was given to its importance, nutrition was under-researched relative to other crop attributes. After Task One trainings senior staff from ASARECA began to integrate nutritional values and other crop properties of concern to final consumers (such as cooking attributes and taste) into their research agendas, as well as began to study “orphan crops” with high potential for human nutrition.

“Then, I think there was one thing in our research portfolio, it was neglected [prior to Africa Lead], the issue of nutrition.... When we had this [Africa Lead] session on nutrition, it enabled us to really highlight it as a priority within the value chain approach; we felt that was very useful.” *“Has that changed things here?”* “It has changed things, because [now] every project literally has a small section, or big section, for that matter, on nutrition.” (Uganda R11, regional organization)

## Practical Experiential Learning and Action Oriented Approach

Africa Lead's curricula designers integrated the workshop's transformative pedagogical elements and multi-disciplinary content into practical participatory exercises that Champions worked on together. Working in teams gave Champions a way to share their expertise and knowledge with each other over the course of the week, which nurtured understanding and respect for their diversity of roles, personalities and perspectives. In a way, the workshop itself was a practicum for the skills being taught. Importantly, this approach helped desensitize participants' shyness or fear of communicating openly in front of people from different countries, status, or sectors.

"It [Africa Lead] is not conventional. It's different from the usual training where you have one or two people with a set agenda running everything from beginning to end. Here we had lots of people bringing in new perspectives. It's highly interactive and everyone is equal, lots of exercises, everybody participates, everybody has to say something. In most trainings people sit, listen, write notes. Here everyone has to participate. It makes a big difference in terms of motivation, in terms of personal appreciation. It fires you up, you come out a different person." (Uganda R11 regional research organization)

The workshop facilitators also constantly challenged participants to go beyond the abstract thinking common in agriculture sector planning by bringing their focus back to *action*. What real life actions could they, in their own lives and circumstances, undertake to address food insecurity? Champions mentioned that the case studies and scenarios they developed together were especially practical and useful to them in this regard.

## Use of African Vernacular

In addition to general comments, some Champions mentioned the use of African vernacular as having been an important factor that helped participants relax and open up to each other.

"The language was down to earth. When we entered, most of us were afraid; hey, these people are coming to speak the Queen's English, big English. We may not understand what is going on. But at the opening [of the workshop] they [the facilitators] tried to break the fears; make it down to earth. And we were free to ask questions; the whole training was participatory. There were a lot of icebreakers, group work." (Ghana R11 NGO)

## High Quality of The Facilitation

Champions from every country mentioned the high quality of the facilitators at the workshops, including the training managers who were present at most of them. What stood out was the range of skills the facilitators used -- from participatory adult learning and transformative pedagogy to knowledge of technical content related to CAADP, food security, leadership and management. Champions observed that this level of skill is unusual for capacity building workshops in Africa, and suggested it is one of the "best practices" that contributed to the impact. If facilitators had not been able to establish an environment where it was safe for people from different countries, sectors and statuses to express their emotions openly in front of each other, while at the same time keeping them engaged with technical content, the transformative impacts of the workshops may not have occurred to the extent that they did.

## CHANGES IN ATTITUDES AND VALUES CHAMPIONS ATTRIBUTE TO TRAININGS

Changes in Champions' knowledge related to CAADP, integrated food security frameworks, and to new knowledge of leadership and management methodologies have been captured by Africa Lead's regular M&E activities, which show that the trainings significantly increased Champions' knowledge of these subjects. This section of the report takes that as its starting point. It focuses on Champions' observations about how the workshop changed their thinking. In the interviews this is used as shorthand for attitudes and values.

After discussing aspects of the Africa Lead trainings that had been significant for them, Champions were asked if the trainings had influenced or changed their thinking in any way. Except for a few outliers (less than 15%), most Champions did attribute long-term changes in their thinking to their experience of Africa Lead. Their responses cluster around a set of closely correlated themes including:

- Urgency to address food insecurity
- Stronger work ethics
- More open and altruistic leadership
- Personal empowerment to speak out and to act

As with best practices, emphases placed on different attitudes and values vary considerably among Champions reflecting their diversity of personalities, contexts, perspectives and experiences.

### Urgency About Food Security

Creating urgency to address food insecurity was a key objective of the transformative methodology pioneered by Africa Lead. Feelings of personal identification and urgency about food security give rise to the motivation and drive Champions' need to become drivers of change in their own local, national or regional contexts. The sense of urgency generated by the trainings tapped into Champions' altruism and motivated them to examine and change other attitudes and values related to food systems transformation.

For many Champions urgency manifested as anger at not being able to go beyond policy frameworks and theory to real action to end food insecurity. In Kenya this was linked to intense frustration many of the Champions felt over the famine that afflicted Kenya in 2011.

“The [Africa Lead] methodology left a big impact on my mind. Something that has really touched me is the fact that despite all the good ideas we have, why aren't we able to address food security in this region? Because a lot of work has been done. There are great policies and ideas coming forth. So what are we doing wrong? Why aren't we seeing tangible results? Why is it that every time there is a drought our people start to die and we start looking for food aid to feed them? Why can't we look for a long-lasting solution? That has really provoked anger in my mind and I really wonder what can be done to address this problem. That is what has really struck me.” (Kenya R13 private sector)

Informants in Senegal linked urgency to taking a more proactive, forward approach to planning and thinking about time. For example:

“In Senegal people don’t consider urgency until it is almost too late; they don’t anticipate so as to eliminate or reduce the likelihood and impact of urgent situations and crises.”  
(Senegal R5 NGO)

Ghanaian Champions also connected urgency to shifting values around planning and time use, as illustrated by the following quote.

*“Did the training influence or change your thinking in any way?”* “Yes, it did. It brought the urgency to the fore. Because of that, teamwork, planning and monitoring and evaluation were my three key takeaways. Because most of the time we have good plans, but we are not able to monitor or evaluate to see if we achieve our objectives or deviate from them. Most of the time we take things for granted as part of our work, but as part of Module One I was introduced to the fact that every aspect of our projects should be well planned. When you plan it cuts unnecessary costs, unnecessary time, and keeps you focused. As I was saying, the training brought to fore the urgency. If we fail to plan and to collaborate with one another, then the negative ripples on the country are so great.” (Ghana R1 national government)

In others, urgency motivated Champions to look self-critically at their own attitudes towards leadership and responsibility – and shifted them to taking personal responsibility for bringing about food security.

“If I were to point out just one thing that stands out about the training [it would be] creating urgency for change and making me responsible, even at the organizational level. It has always been that we look to the CEO to initiate change, we look to the Board of directors to initiate change. In the past that has been our mentality. If there is one thing I would single out, it’s putting me at the center of responsibility, it’s that I must help bring change in food security.” *“Going back to the training, did the training influence the way you think?”* “I think in two ways for me. Putting it simple, the fact that I am responsible. Because I am responsible, when I wake up in the morning I feel that I must know what I am doing; in a word, responsibility makes me accountable. Secondly, that sense of urgency that we need to have done this yesterday. Those two have been very powerful paradigm [shifts] for me.” (Kenya R3 regional organization)

## **Stronger Work Ethics**

Although only a few Champions used the term “work ethic” many described working harder and trying to manage time more effectively as one of the impacts the trainings had on them.

“The training has deepened my work ethics. There were quite a lot of instructions that were spread out that are very relevant to the way one handles things in a businessman type way, for example the issue of time management. People take it [time management] very casually, but we had a very good and in-depth analysis of how one can manage one’s time in the workplace, and this has really helped many of us move to where we are now.” (Uganda R11 regional research organization)



## More Open and Altruistic Leadership

Leadership was the subject of the training and many of the Champions interviewed identified themselves as leaders, so in a way everything discussed in this report deals with different aspects of leadership. This section provides a brief description of traditional as well as modern leadership norms that came out in the research and examples of how Champions were affected by Africa Lead in their personal evolution as leaders. In much of Africa, leadership authority has traditionally been held by older people. High value is placed on showing respect for elders and for authority. Followers are expected to act as dependents, relying on their leaders to make decisions and to provide. As a result, leadership tends to be one-way and top down in terms of communication and directives. Directives flow down to staff, to clients or to beneficiaries through hierarchically defined networks. Conformity tends to be rewarded, information hoarded as a source of power, and there is little demand for accountability.

At the same time, a new model of a modern leader/manager who communicates freely across hierarchies and between groups is emerging in Africa. This type of leader empowers staff, network members, clients and beneficiaries, encourages teamwork, collaboration and innovation, and models values of responsibility, transparency and accountability in their own behavior. Africa Lead created a desire to become more progressive leaders. Evidence from interviews with the Champions suggest that many of them responded to the trainings by shifting towards progressive models of leadership for the first time, or by strengthening their skills to become stronger progressive leaders within their contexts.

Although leadership is multi-faceted, a dimension of change described by many of the Champions involved a new sense of the importance of leader as someone who reaches out, listens, mentors and models the way. The trainings gave Champions skills to communicate laterally with colleagues and partners, or vertically with staff or farmers in a much freer way than before. A number of respondents pointed to “active listening” taught in the trainings and credit it with improving how they interact with colleagues and counterparts. The trainings helped them more actively seek the thoughts and inputs of others and to better analyze their own strengths and weaknesses, thereby changing their approach to problem solving. This impacted leadership, in that many Champions described seeking input from their own staff, from clients or from beneficiaries for the first time after the trainings.

The following quote is from a Champion who is a senior church leader. The training “opened his eyes” to the reality that most of his parishioners are farmers, and made him question the morality of asking them to support the church, when the church made no effort to understand or support them as farmers.

“Being a pastor, the training really opened my eyes. Before the training I used to preach on the pulpit and did not think about the fact that majority of our church members are farmers. We know the money they bring to the church they have gotten from farms. But we are just up here as leaders. We don’t know what they are doing down there. We don’t know what is in their gardens. We are not encouraging them. We don’t know if the money they are giving us is making them hungry. I have realized that we [the church] don’t have any department responsible for agriculture or food security, yet majority of our members get their money from agriculture.” (Uganda R9 church leader)

Following the training, this Champion began visiting his rural parishioners to pray with them in their gardens and farms for the first time. He also started a small farm of his own so that he can understand their struggles trying to achieve food security. Although it will take time, his goal is to sensitize the rest of the church leaders to the importance of agriculture in the lives of their parishioners, and to establish a department in the church responsible for agriculture and food security issues.

A Ghanaian Champion observed that transformative leadership training makes people less selfish and competitive, and more willing to share information.

“Africa Lead opened our eyes for sharing. Sharing is something we don’t do. People don’t want to share their knowledge and experience. Like we talk of networks. We are in networks, but when it comes to sharing, people still hide information. There is a need for a lot of change, and Africa Lead is one organization that can bring about such changes in Ghana, because it takes a lot of work to change attitudes of leaders, to change selfish leadership. This is very important, this capacity building on leadership; we haven’t experienced much of it before [Africa Lead].” (Ghana R11 traditional chief, NGO founder)

In both East and West Africa, exposure to transformative leadership training changed the way that mid-level career civil servants conceive of their roles, becoming less selfish in their behavior towards farmers and more open to “bottom-up” input from staff and farmers. In Liberia a Champion who was a district director of agriculture extension changed his management style 180 degrees after the training. Before the training, he passed directives from the ministry down to his staff, but he never held staff meetings, never asked his staff to inform him about conditions in the community and never held meetings with community stakeholders. After the training he established weekly staff meetings where he actively solicited his staff’s input, and began regular monthly meeting with local community stakeholders in his district.

In Tanzania, one of the Champions has had a long civil service career in irrigation and is senior at the sub-national level. Since he took the training, he has more direct contact with farmers than before and quality of his interactions with them has changed.

*“Can you describe ways the training influenced your work?”* “Yes. First of all, the training mentioned clearly about leadership, that we need to be leaders going ahead of others. So this serves as encouragement to work hard. And leaders also need to get other people to change, that was clearly mentioned [in the training]. A lot of changes are needed among our farmers. So since the training we are encouraging farmers more to take steps in changing their own lives. Going beyond the irrigation we are also advising them to do double cropping that is on the CAADP production pillar, because that can change their lives. Even farmers who are not irrigating are starting to do that on our advice.” *“So before the training, would you have stopped with the irrigation, but not raised farmers consciousness or discussed with them about double cropping?”* “Yes, that is right.” *“Now, how many times in a week are you out in the field talking to farmers?”* “In a week almost 50% of the time we are out there in the field. Before the training I was out in the field maybe 10% or 20% of the time. It [the training] has changed my perception.” (Tanzania R11 sub-national government)

## Personal Empowerment and Courage

The words “empowerment” and “courage” were used by many Champions to describe how Africa Lead training has influenced them. Champions describe new drive to push beyond old boundaries, change how they do business, and speak out in ways they would not have done before. Closely linked were words like ‘energized,’ ‘fired-up’ or ‘gingered-up’ to describe a new sense of purpose to engage with work related to their missions as Champions for Food Security.

Africa Lead cut through urban alienation towards rural people and empowered professionals by helping them see that their actions can make a difference to an issue of vital concern to their countries and to Africa. It also empowered people, especially women, working in semi-formal roles in food value chains by helping them realize that farming and food related businesses are important to the development of their countries.

One of the strongest descriptions of empowerment came from a Ugandan. Although his grandparents were rural people and his grandmother was a farmer, he grew up in a city where he went to the university. Even though he dealt with agriculture professionally, his focus was on his professional concerns, not on using his skills to have a positive impact on the lives of rural people. Africa Lead shifted his life’s purpose by infusing him with a profound sense of social responsibility.

“The training was an eye-opener in many ways, because being a professional does not mean you are empowered. I’ve been reporting agriculture for close to nine years now and the whole time my challenge was all about writing, picking stories to write about. I never thought to say to myself ‘I can change people through this mechanism.’ Having social responsibility to change the situation is something that many of us lack; we get stuck to our professions. That was its [Africa Lead’s] biggest achievement; something that came out very broadly -- that we can be empowered to do better than what we are now; that we can move what we are doing down to the people, we can make sure that the people benefit from it. Before it was just business as usual. Now it’s no longer just business, it’s a passion.” (Uganda R10 media)

Along with social responsibility Champions expressed new confidence or faith that relatively ordinary people like themselves can make a difference. They don’t need to wait for an authority figure, program or donor for permission to act.

“I think what I can say was very clear to me, which I can say I took home [from the training] was the drive, or spirit to move things. The spirit that yes, we can make it! We don’t need to wait for somebody else to make it. In our own way, we each one of us can make it.” (Kenya R4 NGO)

Closely connected to feeling empowered to act, is feeling empowered to speak out to authority. Champions in very different contexts in Tanzania and Ghana described how the training gave them courage to engage with authority figures.

“What I can say briefly is that the training itself was quite inspirational. I learnt a lot of things, but in particular, it build my confidence to engage with the different levels of authority when it comes to promoting agriculture in my country and in the region.” (Tanzania R1 regional org)

The Champions from northern Ghana expressed frustration that information about development opportunities, and hence development resources, always seem to go to the same NGOs and their associated communities and farmer networks, leaving others out. Before the training he had no idea or role model for how to reach out to resource gatekeepers, but the training gave him courage to demand information.

“A lot of farmers who aren’t part of these networks are being sidelined. So one of the things Africa Lead did was help people who are outside push themselves inside, because after the training we raised these issues. The way I was telling you, in the training we were free to talk. That gave us the courage that nobody is going to take us to court for saying these things. So we really said what was worrying us, and our capacity to fight it was built. That is the achievement [of Africa Lead] that I just stated. I can speak freely and safely in front of them. Now I am bold to go to offices [of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture] to ask them for information about what they do, to tell them about what I do and to ask them for information.” (Ghana R11 NGO)

In addition to modern professionals, several Africa Lead workshops included men and women, but especially women, without formal education but with important private sector roles as buyer/bulker/traders, seed grower and distributors, input suppliers, processors or other. The training empowered them by helping them realize they are important to Africa’s development.

The example quoted here is of a semi-literate woman, also a traditional chief, who is a second or third generation processor/trader in a small city. Both her children are studying at university. Prior to Africa Lead, neither planned to return help her with the family business, but since the training they have changed their minds; now both plan to come home to help her transform the family business into a modern enterprise.

“Africa Lead has given me a lot of skills. It boosted my morale. It made me know that what I am doing is important, very important. And that really gave me strength. It has boosted my morale.” (Ghana R13 private sector)

This Champion has not stopped with her own empowerment, she is spreading the word to the women in the 32 women farmer groups that look to her for leadership.

“The impact I have, I have impacted it on my ladies, and they are excited. They are very happy, because some of them were lagging behind in what we were doing. But I made them know that if you do not have the courage yourself, then you cannot go forward. And it is through Africa Lead I got to know that. I have let them know that they have to believe in themselves before someone will also believe in them. I have told them that you are important, because you are a person who is key in the food system. So you matter a lot to the people of Ghana. It was through Africa Lead I saw that.” (Ghana R13 private sector)

In addition to specific dimensions of empowerment, there is evidence from the interviews that their identity as Champions for Food Security is a source of motivation for some who went through the trainings. The ideals of activism and social responsibility instilled in participants during the workshops become embodied in their self-identification as a “Champions for Food Security” after the training ends. The label signifies the unique experience they have been

through, creates a cohort consciousness, and reminds Champions that they are activists for food security in their countries and in Africa.

A Kenyan Champion was explicit about the power and purpose her identity as a Champion for Food Security gives her.

“The other achievement which I got [from Africa Lead] is that it gave me position as a person. I feel confident that I am one of the Champions who can champion food security in Africa, starting with Kenya. What I’m talking about is me, as a person. After the training I got strengthened. I feel I am one of the Champions within Africa, and I must use the information and knowledge to change food security within Africa, starting with Kenya.” (Kenya R2 consultant)

In Ghana, another Champion, who has gone through considerable personal sacrifice since the training, gave moving testimony about how the activist ideals embodied in the concept of Champion continue to inspire and challenge him every day.

“They gave me a glass figurine, on which they wrote “Champion.” I brought it and put it on my table in the office. That [the glass figurine] says “I’m a Champion.” Am I a Champion? What makes me a Champion? How can I exhibit that I’m a Champion? These are things that make me not forget.” (Ghana R12 NGO)

The same Ugandan who spoke about social responsibility described the how the power of the Champion identity came into play at meeting he attended in Swaziland.

“There is pride in being a Champion. I was in Swaziland last year at a meeting and I stood up to introduce myself. ‘I am [XXXX]. I work with [YYYY] in Uganda and I am a Champion for Change trained and certified by USAID Africa Lead program.’ I wondered if there were other Champions [at the meeting] and it was overwhelming, how many Champions stood up from all types of countries. In Uganda when you are moving around you see Champions greeting each other: ‘Hi Champion [XXXX]!’ ‘Hi Champion [YYYY]!’” (Uganda R10 media)

Midway through the Lessons Learned research process a probe question was added to interviews that asked about shifts in energy Champions felt in the days right after the training, and to see if their experiences of heightened energy dropped, stayed the same, or increased over the 12 to 18 months that had elapsed between Module One trainings and the Lessons Learned interviews. A surprisingly large number of Champions reported that their personal drive and commitment as food security Champions has actually grown stronger over the 12 to 18 months since the training ended, implying that a virtuous cycle of empowerment-to-action-to-empowerment was triggered in some of them. This following section quoted from an interview with a Ghanaian Champion gives some sense of how this works.

*“It’s been over a year and that energy was a certain level when you came out of training.” “Yes, fresh.” “Since then, what is happening to that energy?” “I think its going up every day; I will say the energy hasn’t faded. Yes, the energy has been on in my work since then, and also personally trying to look for other ways to develop. You see, after the training you set out to achieve what you said, and as you are moving to try to*

achieve it, you also develop as an individual. And that goes back and makes the impact on your work more.” (Ghana R2 research)

## STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF AFRICA LEAD CAPACITY BUILDING MODALITIES

Although this report focuses on best practices from the 5-day leadership and management training workshops, USAID Missions face decisions on how to use the several capacity building modalities offered by Africa Lead. Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of each modality will help Missions identify effective strategies for deploying them, singly or in combination. Findings from the Lessons Learned research on strengths and weaknesses of Africa Lead’s capacity building tools are summarized here.

### ***5-day leadership and management training for CAADP and Food Security (Task One-Module One)***

- Strengths
  - Transforms and empowers individuals to become Champions
  - Generates urgency about food security
  - Creates desire to embrace new models of leadership
  - Conveys the *systems nature* of the CAADP framework and of value chains
  - Reinforces importance of communication, cooperation and collaboration
  - Improves policy literacy
  - Generates common ground on policy reform among different stakeholders
- Weaknesses
  - 5-day training too short to go into depth on topics covered
  - Champions need follow-on trainings on
    - ❖ management topics to reinforce new models of leadership
    - ❖ technical food system topics to deepen their effectiveness as Champions
  - Champions need follow-on support with action plans and with networks
- Best practices leading to impact
  - High quality facilitation
  - Diversity & high quality of participants
  - When leaders are empowered, it also empowers mid and junior level people, since institutional change flows from empowered leadership at the top

### ***4-day management training workshops on Rapid Results Methods or other custom management topics (Task One-Module Two)***

- Strengths
  - Trainings can be adapted to accommodate different kinds of technical content
  - Standard Module Two curricula improves participants’ capacity to manage for results
- Weaknesses
  - As a stand alone, Module Two lacks transformative impact of leadership training
  - Intensity and sustainability of behavior change diluted when not accompanied by transformative leadership training to instill strong ongoing motivation
- Best practices leading to impact
  - Make sure top leaders from organizations targeted for Module Two have also taken the 5-day leadership training
  - Train several people from the same organization to reinforce change within the organization

## HOW CHAMPIONS APPLIED AFRICA LEAD TRAININGS IN THEIR WORK

This section of the report describes some of the ways Champions applied new knowledge and skills gained through Africa Lead to their work and lives by describing illustrative examples from the Lessons Learned interviews. After the trainings, Champions made a wide range of changes in their behaviors and engaged in new actions and initiatives inspired by Africa Lead. As a generalization, the scope and nature of changes made or actions taken depended on the resources at the Champion's disposal, the position they occupied relative to larger organizations and networks, and food security issues they were grappling with.

Actions ranged from the highly personal to changes in departments, organizations, associations or networks, to actions with potential to impact ways stakeholders interact moving agriculture development forward. The stories that follow give examples of changes at the individual, organizational, and systems levels. They do not reflect all, or even necessarily the most spectacular stories, but they give a flavor of the kinds of things Champions have done, which Champions themselves credit to their experience of the Africa Lead trainings.

### Individual Actions

***Integrated Extension and Value Chain Upgrading.*** Champions working in extension roles with farmers have spent more time with clients and also incorporated new elements into their extension work inspired by the CAADP framework. One example is the Tanzanian irrigation specialist who started to teach farmers about double cropping, even though it lies outside of his scope as an irrigation engineer. Another example is from Uganda and involves a young NGO program director responsible for a maize production and marketing program. Before the training he thought of his work strictly in terms of helping farmers increase yields and get better market access. After the training he realized poor nutrition is a critical issue in the communities, so on his own initiative he partnered with another Africa Lead Champion from the same part of Uganda, who knows about nutrition. Together they developed a training module on nutrition that he has incorporated into his extension work with grain farmers.

The same Ugandan NGO program director had attended a workshop on warehouse receipt systems a few months before he took Africa Lead's Module One training, but did not act on anything he learned until after he became a Champion. Based on the first workshop, warehouse receipts had seemed remote and abstract. But Africa Lead's training made it come alive for him. The training also connected him to Champions working on warehouse receipts and regional grain trade, with whom he has stayed in touch. By the time this Champion was interviewed for Lessons Learned he had been actively promoting warehouse receipt systems with farmers in his district for over a year. Some of the farmer groups had set up structures and systems; he was also working with buyers. He is passionate about developing grain value chains and wants more training to develop his expertise and skills in grain warehousing and regional trade.

***Volunteer Extension.*** In Liberia, two Champions from the NGO sector, who knew nothing about food security prior to the trainings, both have begun to speak about these topics with farmers and local communities after their experience with Africa Lead. One of them, a woman with an NGO focused on natural resource management (NRM), had been working with rural women's groups for years without ever thinking about struggles they face every day trying to ensure

enough food for their families. Once she started talking with them about it, a whole new way of viewing the world and her mission opened up for her. She still saw the NRM agenda as important, but she also began to see it as siloed. She was ashamed she had been blind to the core struggle in these women's lives for so long. She longs to learn more about agriculture and food security so she can be more effective in her work with rural women. The other Liberian Champion returned to his natal community after the training in order to bring some of the knowledge he'd learned back to them. Extension is limited in Liberia and local communities are hungry for information on agriculture. The Champion's community now turns to him for information, and although he does the best he can, he also longs for more training so he can serve them better.

**Replication of Task One Pedagogy.** Several Champions have applied methods from Africa Lead in their own work with beneficiaries or clients. For example, a Champion from Ghana was developing a training program for SMEs. His objective was to implement it across Ghana, but he did not like the didactic pedagogy used in most trainings, so he had not moved ahead with the project. The pedagogical approach and elements used by Africa Lead radically altered his vision of the possible. This is especially true with the group exercises and games which this Champion believes help people grasp what is being taught in simple, straight-forward ways to which they can relate. He put many of the techniques he learned from Africa Lead into his SME training and went on to implement it with great success. This Champion believes most capacity building given in Africa is based on didactic methods to which people cannot relate, so even though a lot of time and donor money is spent on "talk shops," nothing ever changes. He believes the pedagogy piloted by Africa Lead could revolutionize the way capacity building is conducted in Africa.

**Cascade Trainings.** Champions from farmer-based organizations have replicated Module One in "cascade trainings" with their farmer members. For example, in Ghana, the leader of a women's farmer network developed a strategy to sensitize all her members on the content of Module One, including CAADP, by adding discussions to activities funded by other donors.

**Tipping Points.** Several Champions' narratives revolved around motifs of risk taking. Their experience with Africa Lead empowered them to make changes in their professional lives they would not have made before the training. For example, a Champion in Kenya was founder and head of a well-known and securely funded regional network to promote environmentally sustainable agriculture. During the training he became increasingly convinced of the need to work holistically with the whole range of issues facing small holder farmers. "I realized it is not just conservation agriculture that can make us food secure, there are a lot of other things to it: market linkages, value addition, agro-processing, policy articulation; these are all related." He realized his vision was "much broader than just one technology." So he left his position as director of the established network to lead a new NGO more in line with his vision of providing integrated support to farmers. "It was a tough decision, to come out of comfort to a place where we didn't even have structures or stable funding." (Kenya R4 NGO)

**Making Development AID More Effective.** Several Champions leveraged their experience with Africa Lead to make donor funded approaches more effective and sustainable. A Kenyan Champion, who is an expert on cooperatives and value chains, heads a company that provides capacity building on value chain methodologies. Prior to Africa Lead, most of their workshops catered to single groups (for example farmers or input dealers), or else were filled ad hoc, as



any business course would be. This Champion's experience with Africa Lead led to an important paradigm shift in how she conceived of using her company's skills with value chain analysis. Prior to the training she had not used stakeholder analysis to *proactively* set up regional workshops with single commodity focus. Now her company uses stakeholder analysis to identify key players across the length of a single commodity value chain to bring them together for intense one to two week value chain mapping and planning workshops. Between 2011 and 2012, her company organized 12 commodity-based value chain stakeholder workshops that brought key players together for the first time. The energy and excitement in the workshops is intense. As participants begin to realize that together, they have the ability and power to radically transform and upgrade their value chains. (Kenya R13 private sector)

***Reaching Beyond Personal Limits.*** Other stories are of Champions who reach beyond personal limits in remarkable ways in response to the trainings. Among similar cases of remarkable Champions, one concerns a woman from Liberia with high school education. Together with her parents she had grown rice and beans all her life, using traditional methods. Known for her remarkable skill as a farmer, she was selected in 2009 to participate in a donor program on rice seed production. Just before the Africa Lead training in Accra, she and three employees were growing seed on 0.5 hectares, which she sold to NGOs and FAO (U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization).

She changed her life completely after the training in Accra. Working closely with other Champions, she helped established a farmer-based organization in Liberia. She also recruited and organized 500 farmers into an association and began giving them rice seed, teaching them how to grow it on her own farm, and following up with extension visits to their farms.

She expanded her own seed production from 0.5 to 10 hectares, and went from three to fifty employees. She is saving to finance a rice mill and packaging equipment, and has identified land and started brick production for a rice storage building. When these are in place she plans to aggregate, process, package and market rice grown by members of her farmers association.

One of the things Africa Lead taught her was how to communicate and manage people. This has made a difference in her capacity to bring people on board with her vision. This Champion has no external salary, funds or loans; she is building her business one step at a time by plowing back profits from her harvests. She is a well-known farm leader, constantly moving from place to place to provide technical and moral support.

“Being a leader now, they give me a hard time because they expect me to do everything for them. So I have to teach them how to do business. What I sow in the soil is what I take and sow back again. Nobody is helping me, so in this way I motivate them to keep going.” (Liberia R5 farmer)

When asked how she sustained her energy with so many farmers turning to her for leadership, she contrasted herself before and after her experience with Africa Lead.

“From Accra I grabbed a vision that we shouldn't just come home and sit on it. You have to come home and do something, so others will say ‘Yes, she is up to this level’ [of being a Champion]. When I was working [before Africa Lead] I was selfish in working. But when I came back from Ghana I just decided, I have got seed in my warehouse right

now. Some farmers don't have seed to plant. So I gave it to them." ... and that is how it started. (Liberia R5 farmer)

## **Actions Impacting Organizations**

The impact the Africa Lead experience has had on Champions is also evidenced beyond the level of individual to shifts in practice at the institutional level. Empowered by the leadership skills and motivated by the sense of urgency gained from the training, some Champions have embedded new management and operational styles in their home organizations. In particular they have instituted regular team meetings with staff, solicited staff input on strategic directions or decisions, and empowered staff to try new ideas. In other cases, Champions' organizations themselves have added priorities and adopted new mandates. Champions who were part of top leadership circles within their organizations, especially when several were trained from the same organization, were able to make high impact changes across their entire organization or network. In contrast, Champions in mid-level (or lower) positions were limited to making smaller more incremental changes in ways they supervise their own staff.

Most Champions from government agencies were mid-level civil servants, while Champions from other sectors were often leaders or senior managers of NGOs, businesses, networks, associations or research organizations. As a result, impacts of Africa Lead trainings at the organizational level were negligible on large public sector institutions, but could be quite significant on organizations from other sectors. Some ways the trainings impacted non-state organizations through the new empowerment of their leaders are illustrated with examples from Ghana and East Africa.

***New Management and Operational Styles.*** Most of the national leadership of a farmer-based organization (FBO) in Ghana attended Module One trainings between January and June 2011. Afterwards they sat down together and agreed "that the training given to us, if taken seriously, will help move our organization forward; so let us start practicing it now." They identified needs for more openness and transparency among themselves, more sharing of information throughout the organization, and greater willingness to delegate power.

Before the training there were no regular membership meetings, the president was the only person authorized to sign checks on the FBO's account. He personally spoke for and represented the FBO at events all over Ghana. After the training, check-signing authority was expanded to seven people, transparency protocols around use of FBO funds were established, and the president began empowering members of the board. The national leadership started to convene regular membership meetings four times a year and began to share information and delegate authority to regional and district levels of the organization.

"We used not to meet regularly. But after the training, we agreed that even when we don't have funds to call for meetings, so that those who are committed can participate. And I have been surprised; almost everybody comes. People's commitment is deeper than we realized. Now, we don't have members complaining 'we don't know of this issue, we don't know of this program, we don't know of these policies' because of the delegation of duties. Now, when there is a national issue, the regional focal person in each region disseminates the information to the district and community mobilization officers, they also get the information to the grassroots, and it makes the work very

easy... And these days, when we are meeting as a board, a different person from the board chairs the meeting each time, with my support, and so that's another change. Now, in my absence, a board meeting can still go on, but it used not to be so, because everyone was insisting that the president must be there. After this training [Africa Lead] I told them, "If the president drops dead, what happens to the organization?" It must continue. Let us stop this kind of bureaucracy and look at the importance of the organization, because a lot of people benefit from what we do, so we need to continue. It doesn't mean that if one person is not there, it should not go on. It must continue."  
(Ghana, R14 FBO)

The shifts in leadership described by this Champion have led to a spread of empowerment throughout the organization. Now, the FBO president encourages regional and district officers to engage directly in advocacy on issues, whereas before he was the only person who spoke for the organization.

*"As a result of the increased culture of transparency and openness, and willingness to delegate power, are you communicating more freely?"* "Much more freely. Even when somebody asks a big question, about a big issue, I tell them to contact A,B or C, so they know the information is all over, its not just within me. Yesterday I listened to the news and I was surprised to hear one of my officers talking about fertilizer subsidy in one of the districts. So I sent him a text telling him to keep the momentum, keep the flame burning. I want to hear from different sources, to tell the whole country we are a national association, it is not just one person who is doing it, a lot of people are doing it. That is the only way we can move ahead." (Ghana R14 FBO)

***New Business Practices.*** Because of the new concept of a leader as someone who empowers their followers, a Champion who owns a food processing business radically altered the way she treats and works with her staff, leading to expansion of her business. Before the training she was the only one in sales, because she did not trust her workers with the products. But after the training she enlisted them all as sales representatives based on commissions and it has caused a surge in her business's volume.

*"Did the training influence the way you run your business?"* "Yes, because I used to have workers, but I didn't let them go out with my product to sell, I was scared. But after [the training] I saw the need for allowing them. Before the person goes out I give them the product that maybe will cost up to his salary and I tell the person if you are able to sell this, your commission is this. So besides the salary the person has commission. And it was through the [Africa Lead] workshop that I was able to do all of this." *"Has it motivated them?"* "It has. They are motivated and excited. They are selling more and my business is expanding. And that is because of the change in my attitude. Because I have changed, I have changed some of them as well. I have made them know the reason why we should come together, because if you are not together, you cannot share ideas... You have to share ideas. You have to tell what you are doing, and ask what they feel about what you are doing, and ask what they think they also want to do, so it makes you grow every day." (Ghana R13 private sector)

***New Priorities and Mandates.*** In East Africa, the leadership effect has also influenced the direction of the work of organizations. ASARECA sent several of its senior staff and top

leadership to Africa Lead trainings. Afterwards the staff spent time together examining what being Champions for Food Security meant for their institutional mandate. This led to re-examining uses of the wealth of data ASARECA houses toward informing larger public policy development. The Association, founded in 1994, covers 11 countries, the newest being South Sudan. Having already shifted from a crop-specific orientation to the more holistic value chain approach, ASARECA is leveraging its work with universities, national agricultural research organizations, and more recently with NGOs toward using its data more proactively for policy reform. Through such innovations as hosting **media** breakfasts ASARECA is stimulating more awareness among reporters and editors about food security issues and actions. This, in turn, is informing a public discourse on these issues and pressing policymakers to respond to specific opportunities to improve farmer access to agricultural finance, re-examining “orphan crops” for their nutritional value, expanding business development through converting unsold fresh fruit to dried products, and the like. (Uganda R11 research)

### **Actions with Potential to Impact Wider Systems**

In both East and West Africa, Champions have sparked follow-on activity that is advancing capacity to improve food security *systemically* through impacts on national value chains, media awareness, or on regional level value chain coordination. The following studies illustrate ways in which Africa Lead’s transformative leadership and management training inspired groups of Champions in positions to effect this type of broad scale change.

**National Value Chains.** In Ghana the 3,000 plus member National Association of Poultry Farmers (NAPF) completely shifted its approach to advocacy as a result of the training. Prior to Africa Lead, NAPF had applied to the Business Sector Advocacy Challenge Fund (BUSAC) for help with a campaign to engage the government on issues affecting the poultry sector, but BUSAC turned them down. After attending Africa Lead, NAPF Champions convinced their executive director to submit a new proposal to BUSAC based on Kotter’s 8 points for “creating awareness, creating urgency, forming the working team and etc.” BUSAC approved the new proposal, because “we had a better strategy, based on what we’d learned.”

With assistance from BUSAC, NAPF began a campaign that included three critical innovations inspired by Africa Lead. For the first time, NAPF used mass media to raise public awareness and build urgency around the need to support a national poultry sector. They conducted policy research and analysis *before* approaching lobbying targets. They also conducted stakeholder analysis to identify key lobbying targets *across all* of government, as well as in other sectors.

By August 2012 NAPF’s campaign had resulted in a signed MOU with the National Buffer Stock Corporation to distribute subsidized maize to poultry farmers for the first time, and a major contract with Liberty Commodity (a private sector investor group) to provide broilers and eggs to a new national chain of poultry retail outlets. At the same time, NAPF and BUSAC were preparing a second campaign on the ECOWAS Common Tariff and on government egg purchase for Ghana’s school lunch program. Africa Lead helped NAPF turn a corner in its approach to advocacy and communication that was critical to its successes, especially with government.

“Before [the training] we were very abrasive with government. So [after the training] we went on to win-win messages, and government gave us a listening. Before we were

face-to-face with government, face-to-face with the ministry (MOFA), but this time around we used the media. We changed the messages, we changed the approach, we even changed the medium.” (Ghana R10 FBO)

Although content on Kotter’s 8 Steps was a key factor in the impact Africa Lead had on NAPF, it was not the only one. The relationships NAPF formed with other Champions also contributed to the success of the campaign by opening new channels of communication between non-state actors and government. So even though Champions from the public sector did not impact their organizations as much as non-state actors did, their inclusion in Champions’ networks was also a critical factor in NAPF’s new “win-win” approach to government advocacy.

*“Have the relationships you formed with Champions through the trainings been relevant to the success of the advocacy campaign?”* “It is relevant because we know exactly what is happening in the various departments and ministries. We are able to know who to contact and we have a common bond with them, a common approach [based on fact that they are all Champions]. And it has facilitated dialogue with those who are higher [government officials with power to change policy] because we know who they are before we get there, through this [Africa Lead Champions] networking. We know the nature of that person, their characteristics, how they will behave, and whether the person will accept the message that we will bring, all because of the [Africa Lead Champion] networking. You see, because at each of these Champions trainings you meet people from different ministries, agencies and industries.” (Ghana R10 FBO)

**Regional Initiatives.** Several Champions affiliated with the East African Grain Council (EAGC) are putting thought to deed as a result of the actual “action plans” inspired by the training. One such innovative device is the creation of a **regional food balance sheet**. Described as akin to an accounting balance, this snapshot of food surpluses, deficits and distribution provides all actors, public and private, in the agricultural sector the same data consolidated in one place. By analyzing the surpluses and gaps in available food across the region, these different critical players can both plan policy and trade more efficiently and effectively.

“... our problem statement was that a lot of the times we are groping in darkness on what we have available and we do not plan adequately because we do not know what food we have. A lot of food is going to waste because there are so many surplus areas in the region that are not directly linked to the deficit areas. And we looked at it in terms of saying that we can actually improve that situation by actually linking these two through regional trade. But before you can do that we need to have that information where policymakers, traders are involved in moving goods at a profit exactly know where the need is, where they can source from and how do they link. And when you begin to do that a lot of other dynamics come into play. You need to work with policy guides. You need to work with cross-border officials who are supposed to enable rather than hinder regional trade so we set out to do that.” (Kenya R3 regional organization)

In a set of steps the Champions directly attribute to the training, the EAGC set up national consultative multi-stakeholder groups of farmers, millers, traders, and government personnel. These bodies are now standing committees under the auspices of the East Africa Community.

“For the very first time we ended up with a regional food balance sheet in September of 2011 at a meeting that we held in Arusha. And at this meeting we brought in together all those standing committees from all the five partner states to aggregate the national food balance sheet at the regional level. Now since that time the EAC took it up and the sectorial council in food security recommended that we needed to expand that program and create a comprehensive food balance sheet that was not just based on cereals and grains like that [that] caters to the regional diet, at it were. So in May this year EAC did organize a meeting and we supported it together with EAC and we supported it together with USAID COMPETE to put together a regional framework for a comprehensive regional food balance sheet.” (Kenya R3 regional organization)

This pilot phase has been further institutionalized with the design and hosting of an easy to navigate Internet-based food portal: [WWW.RFBS.IN](http://WWW.RFBS.IN). Along with guest access, the site also provides password-protected data submission and sharing. This feature has helped to quell fears of private sector partners who seek to protect their comparative advantage in the marketplace. They can share their data without revealing who has what stock or is in need of any given commodity.

Food supply information aggregated at the regional level is an innovation that has great potential for promoting efficiencies in the production and trade of staple commodities. Acting on this knowledge can even out market gaps and bulges to more evenly distribute food to consumers and stabilize the income of producers, processors and traders.

# Part Four

## Recommendations for Africa Lead

The final section of the *Africa Lead Lessons Learned Main Synthesis Report* presents recommendations suggested by the Champions on how to build on the the 2010-2013 Africa Lead program in subsequent USAID programs going forward, as well as their recommendations for advancing CAADP overall.

These recommendations represent a constellation of thoughtful and practical applications for applying Africa Lead trainings and their associated benefits. The Summary that follows the Recommendations highlights the broad outline of how these steps help advance the ultimate goal of Africans improving food security for Africans.

During key informant interviews, Champions discussed ideas to improve Africa Lead moving forward, including practical suggestions on how to target leadership training to maximize wider impacts on food security in their countries. There were also animated discussions and recommendations for post-training follow-up for Champions who have been trained, as well as discussions of capacity building, knowledge sharing and policy development. Some of these insights reflect actions USAID can undertake. Others respond more directly to implementing the CAADP framework more instrumentally.

These recommendations fall into three groups, those directed at bilateral Missions in particular, those directed at both bilateral and regional missions, and those aimed more directly at realizing CAADP's goals.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BILATERAL MISSIONS**

Three recommendations fall under the scope of USAID bilateral Missions, since they need to be crafted to fit the specific contexts prevailing in each country.

- ❖ **Improve follow-up with Champions post-training**
- ❖ **Expand transformative leadership training for food security**
- ❖ **Install Africa Lead country program officers in Missions with significant buy-in**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BOTH BILATERAL AND REGIONAL MISSIONS**

- ❖ **Build African capacity to implement leadership and management training for CAADP and food security**
- ❖ **Expand access to practical training opportunities for Champions**
- ❖ **Use blogs for knowledge sharing among Champions**
- ❖ **Leverage Champions networks for policy development processes**

## RECOMMENDATIONS IN GENERAL

- ❖ **Hold Ministries of Agriculture and other key players, including donors, accountable based on CAADP framework, principles and their own analyses by empowering farmers and their communities.**

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BILATERAL MISSIONS

### 1) Improve Follow-Up with Champions Post-Training

Champions in all countries expressed frustration at the lack of substantive thinking about how to follow-up with fellow Champions after leadership trainings ended. Africa Lead workshops are important and have profound impacts, but Champions also need to be supported post-training if they are to reach their potential *as networks of likeminded and committed leaders driving change in their national food systems.*

During key informant interviews, Champions were questioned about their contact with other Champions after the trainings. Findings suggest that Champions who attended the same workshop and who also share work interests, or come from the same small area, or share other networks (such as church) tend to stay in touch. But there was no systematic way for Champions to meet, share lessons, or stay connected to the whole network from their country. This Champions see as a missed opportunity to learn from, encourage, help and inspire each other. This also impedes transfer of learning from their experiences to USAID or to CAADP working groups in Ministries of Agriculture.

The same criticism came from bilateral Missions. Those interviewed feel that Africa Lead does not have an adequate process in place for linking them to the Champions from their countries. Some of the Mission points of contact note that even if Africa Lead gives them a list of names, there is still need for a formal “hand-over” process so that contact can be initiated with Champions in ways that are transparent and inclusive of the whole network.

Some bilateral Missions are also frustrated because members of their own (African) staffs working on Feed the Future programs were not allowed to attend Module One Leadership trainings, even though they had supplied names for the workshops. In retrospect, not allowing Mission staff to attend Module One trainings was a missed opportunity to build their understanding of the methodology and its relevance for bilateral Mission programs under Feed the Future.

During Task One workshops, Africa Lead encouraged Champions to stay connected with each other after the training. Efforts were made to provide them with lists and contact information of Champions from the same country who were in different workshops between January and June 2011. Champions were also asked to respond to an online survey six months after their training. From time to time, Africa Lead’s regional offices send out notices to Champions via email. On a few occasions, Africa Lead’s COP and DCOPs have invited groups of Champions for meetings, which is also a chance to gather their feedback.

The problems with these efforts are that they are ad hoc, and they depend on Africa Lead’s M&E staff, who have other responsibilities. They also rely on email lists to contact Champions,



as opposed to mobile phone or written letter. Since a significant minority of the Champions do not use email, they lost touch with the program after the training.

The Africa Lead program maintains a Facebook page for Champions, but few of those interviewed look at it, partly because of difficulty accessing the Internet. But also because only the youngest Champions in the sample (under the age of 30) are comfortable using social media. Most of the Champions over the age of 30 or 35 associate social media with frivolous social activities. They said they rarely, if ever, visit Africa Lead's Facebook page, even if they do have Internet access. Furthermore, the Facebook page and emails from Africa Lead's project offices will stop when Africa Lead ends, and unless something else is there to sustain the networks, even this limited connectivity will dissipate.

Champions have come up with ideas for Africa Lead to support same country Champions networks more effectively:

- Sponsor annual Champions meetings for same-country Champions;
- Provide modest support required to maintain the national Champions network; and
- Establish a process for same-country Champions to decide whether they want to establish a formal network or association.

## ***SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS***

### **❖ Hold National Champions Meetings**

Africa Lead should work with bilateral Missions to organize 2-day Champions Meetings in countries with 100 or more Champions to formally introduce Champions to USAID bilateral Missions and to national ministries. The entire cohort needs to be invited using phone and written letter, as well as email.

Among other things, meetings would provide a venue for same country Champions to network, share lessons learned from their work, share resources, and identify mentors to help them with their post-training efforts to put the trainings into practice. Africa Lead could work with Missions to establish a schedule of Champions meetings (for example, annually), so that the meetings function as a capstone event to formally introduce newly-minted Champion cohorts to each other and to USAID, government agencies, and veteran Champions.

There would need to be modest investment by Africa Lead to support someone to maintain the network between annual meetings. Liberian Champions, especially, feel very strongly about the need for a National Champions' Meeting organized and sponsored by USAID. But it would also be useful in other countries with large numbers of Champions.

### **❖ Support Champions with a Process to Decide If They Want to Establish A Formal Champions' Network in Their Country**

Champions from Kenya are passionate about the need to formalize the Kenyan Champions network to give them legitimacy interacting with the government on food sector reform. There was considerable debate over whether this would be redundant with CAADP's roadmap for Non-State Actor platforms. The Champions who recommend this are sophisticated individuals,

many with deep understanding of the Kenyan political economy. They argue that precisely *because* Champions come from all sectors and transcend politics, they are in a unique position to support the CAADP process in Kenya. This is especially true for facilitation of dialogue among the non-state actor platforms (which are organized by sector) and between non-state actors and the government. They feel that Champions would benefit Kenya by acting as an independent “Think-Tank” for the government.

Ugandan Champions are also passionate about formalizing the Champions’ network in Uganda. They feel a formal network is needed to amplify and sustain positive energy, more open communication, and innovation flowing from the transformative leadership trainings in Uganda. Ugandan Champions want to grow a “Champions for Food Security” movement in the country. They want to ensure it is sustainable, and eventually independent of donor funding. They believe that establishing a formal Champions’ network or association is the first step in this process.

Champions in other countries are not thinking about forming formal networks, like they are in Kenya and Uganda. Except for Tanzania, it did not come up in other interviews. But Tanzanian Champions feel that there are advantages to maintaining an informal network of Champions that could be managed by an existing civil society network or policy dialogue working group.

Given differences in each country’s context, decisions whether to support formation of a formal Champions’ network or association need to be made on a country-by-country basis. Champions in both Kenya and Uganda urge USAID Missions to put the question to the Champions themselves at a National Meeting of the kind recommended above. Champions could then vote on whether or not to form a formal network or association, and also on how to organize and fund it. Champions in Kenya and Uganda emphasize that USAID needs to support the process at the beginning, including financing the first two or three meetings, in order to confer legitimacy to the process and outcome.

## **2) Expand Transformative Leadership Training for Food Security At National Level**

Champions from all countries recommend applying the leadership trainings in their own countries. While the regional aspect of the trainings held in Nairobi between January – June 2011 were important to those who attended, Champions *also* think the leadership training is too important to limit in this way.

Country specific trainings have also been transformative. The only Task One leadership trainings by country as of August 2012 were held in Uganda. Diversity was also maintained in the Ugandan workshops by mixing participants from different agencies, sectors and socio-economic statuses in each workshop, even though only Ugandans attended. Missions can act on the finding that the transformative impact of the Uganda-only workshops seems to be just as intense as that of the regional workshops held in Nairobi.

### ***SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS***

#### **❖ Target Leaders from Non-State Actor Organizations**

Task One trainings had greater impacts on organizations when the top leadership took the trainings, as was the case with the FBOs in Ghana, or when the top leaders were already committed to the collaborative value chain approach promoted by Africa Lead, as was the case with ASARECA and to EAGC in East Africa.

❖ **Target Those Who Hold Real Power in Public Sector Agencies**

Champions in West Africa note that the people who hold real power in public sector agencies were not at the trainings, and recommend that they be targeted, in addition to mid-level civil servants. Some of the Champions observe that the willingness of this kind of entrenched, siloed leader to change would be reinforced if top elected leaders, members of the media and religious organizations also become Champions for the cause of food security.

❖ **Target Top Level Elected Officials**

Champions recommend targeting national elected leaders such as members of parliament and governors with leadership training for CAADP and Food Security. Missions in Uganda and Tanzania have implemented modified Module One trainings for Parliamentarians and other top leaders. At the request of the Kenya Ministry of Agriculture, the USAID Kenya Mission has asked Africa Lead to organize Module One trainings for all the newly elected governors about to take office from the March 2013 election cycle. Building high-level Champions will increase the impacts of Champions at all other levels in society.

❖ **Target Sub-National Levels (region, province, district, county etc.)**

In addition to targeting national leaders, Champions recommend targeting sub-national food system actors with transformative leadership training for CAADP and Food Security. This is especially indicated because decentralization means that a lot of the effective decision-making that impacts farmers takes place at sub-national levels. Including sub-national food system actors in continued Africa Lead leadership training would improve work ethics of people in local government, reduce competition among NGOs, and build trust among private sector, NGO, and government stakeholders operating in a region.

❖ **Target Media and Religious Organizations More Systematically**

National media and religious organizations could play a very important and constructive role building a broad base of urgency about food security among the public and educating the public about CAADP and about policies impacting farm incomes and national food security. Africa Lead and USAID Missions should seriously consider systematically targeting both these sectors to bring them on board as Champions for CAADP and food security.

### **3) Install Africa Lead Country Program Officers in Missions with Significant Buy-In**

A few Champions recommend having a dedicated “Africa Lead” program officer located in countries with large Africa Lead programs. This is actually an important recommendation since locally knowledgeable program managers could facilitate strategic targeting of organizations and individuals for training, building the cadre of leaders. This would also greatly improve the quality of post-training follow-up with Champions discussed above.

## ***SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATION***

- ❖ **Have a Dedicated Africa Lead Program Officer Located in Countries with Large Africa Lead Programs**

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BOTH BILATERAL AND REGIONAL USAID MISSIONS**

### **1) Build African Capacity to Implement Leadership and Management Training for CAADP and Food Security**

Champions feel that high quality, practical training courses on leadership and management are so important, and so hard to get in Africa, that Africans' own capacity to provide this for other Africans needs to be developed in East, Southern and West Africa.

## ***SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS***

- ❖ **Develop a certification program for facilitators skilled with transformative pedagogical methods and with technical content related to leadership, management, CAADP and food security.**

Champions recommend developing local African capacity to replicate an expanded version of Africa Lead's Task One training curricula.

- ❖ **Develop Modules One and Two into a full multi-module curriculum.**
- ❖ **Strategically select local organizations to become the replicator of the methodology.**

Building sustainable African ownership of the methodology and content will ensure that leadership and management training remains accessible to Africans after donor program funding ends.

### **2) Use Local Institutions to Expand Access to Practical Training Opportunities**

In addition to leadership and management training, Champions want opportunities to continue building their technical skills in all aspects of agriculture and food security.

## ***SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS***

- ❖ **Proactively look for follow-on technical training opportunities for Champions.**
- ❖ **Leverage diverse local institutions and the Champions' networks to create practical subject matter training.**
- ❖ **Expand hands-on training opportunities for other Champions.**

Most educated Champions, who also interact frequently with donors, have multiple opportunities to attend technical workshops. However, Champions who are not as well educated or who do not come into contact with donors do not have many opportunities to build their practical

knowledge of agriculture. Yet unless they are able to build these skills, their capacity to develop as leaders for CAADP and food security in their own local contexts will be limited.

### 3) Use Blogs for Knowledge Sharing Among Champions

Although many Champions are reluctant to use Facebook, several say they wish they had a way to share substantive content and collaborative problem solving with other Champions all over Africa.

#### **SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATION**

❖ **Set up a dedicated blog platform for Champions that is password protected.**

For those Champions with a reluctance to using social media for professional purposes, the alternative of an electronic space for posting and exchanging information has greater resonance.

### 4) National and Regional Policy Reform Processes

Africa Lead Task One trainings were very effective at improving participants' policy and economic literacy about agriculture. The training shifted people towards understanding the systems nature of agriculture. The Champions see further potential in *elevating and standardizing knowledge* systematically.

#### **SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATION**

❖ **Apply transformative methodology to engage national and regional policymakers on policy reform agendas.**

This lesson in finding common ground can be affirmatively applied to specific policy reform processes such as regional integration of grain trading systems or in the context of specific value chains.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CAADP AND FOOD SECURITY**

A broad consensus emerged among Champions across all ten country studies that the CAADP framework has potential to be a powerful tool in moving the agriculture agenda forward in their countries, both nationally and through regional integration. At this point, almost no one in these countries has ever heard of CAADP, even educated people. CAADP remains an esoteric subject assigned to a few technocrats in Ministries of Agriculture and perceived by the top levels in ministry/government systems as a donor-driven hoop to jump through to access funding.

According to Champions interviewed it is the CAADP framework that is critical – not any given investment plan – because the framework is an empowerment/bill of rights for the agriculture sector and for farmers.

#### **SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATION**

❖ **Hold Ministries of Agriculture and other key players, including donors, accountable based on CAADP framework, principles and their own analyses through empowering farmers and their communities.**

There is a consistent response from Champions across the country studies to questions about high pay-off strategies to realize the potential of CAADP for agriculture sector transformation at the national level. Achieving this result lies in utilizing Farmer-Based Organizations (from national apex bodies on down to the local level) to spearhead campaigns (including media campaigns) to generate widespread knowledge and understanding of CAADP among the broad base of small and medium farmers.

Once medium and small holder farmers are empowered to start analyzing and prioritizing their investment needs based on their own grounded sets of opportunities and constraints, they can start to hold their governments accountable.

Connecting further to the grassroots through targeting community-based networks that serve youth or religious groups is similarly viewed as critical to advancing citizen empowerment. Mobilizing other networks to embrace actions that promote food security can be achieved by making the CAADP framework better understood.

Government ministries will not invest in “mainstreaming” CAADP within their own countries because there are inherent tensions – conflicts of interest manifested in idiosyncratic ways in each of the ten country studies. Likewise even though regional and continental institutions supported by donors to provide the “institutional architecture” for the four CAADP pillars are important, they are not capable of pushing CAADP to the next stage because they are not sufficiently connected to national contexts and it is not in their mandates to mainstream CAADP within national contexts.

Several Champions talked about overcoming this obstacle through:

- Building African capacity to implement transformative leadership training, and
- Bringing it to scale in each country using trainer-of-trainer models in organizations with extensive networks that reach down to local levels throughout the country.

Future training should target officials in key government agencies at national and district levels to shift mindsets about the rights of farmers and the responsibilities of service providers. Tolerance of corruption needs to be reduced and insistence on transparency and accountability, increased.

# Part Five

## Summary of Lessons Learned

The evidence from the Lessons Learned research is that the 5-day leadership and management training course piloted by Africa Lead does shift the knowledge, attitudes, motivation and behaviors of training participants into greater alignment with CAADP principles of inclusiveness, transparency and accountability.

Africa Lead’s methodology empowers Champions with the commitment and skills they need to begin establishing new standards of leadership in their individual work and, in some cases, in their organizations. In optimal cases it also improves communication and collaboration between institutions and sectors by building essential bridges among government agencies, universities and research institutes, and a range of non-state actors and networks. Taken together, these effects hold potential for improving processes that are key to the future development of African agriculture, including:

- The evolution of policy reforms.
- Greater inclusiveness and transparency of investments in agriculture.
- Greater accountability to ensure investments have impacts on food security.

These reflections on achieving CAADP policy goals pose an array of solutions from the household level (nutrition value) to producer (cooperating for volume) and trader (export market expansion) and policymaker (balancing domestic priorities with regional exigencies).

***Institutionalized Attributes from the Training Methodology.*** The methodology of the training combined with the selectively diverse cross-section of participants has reinforced attributes of **collaborative** and **comparative** learning. The participatory exercise and group work have fostered a continuing appreciation for the necessity of collaboration to tackle a problem as complex as food security. As illustrated above these techniques have transcendent value able to be applied in a variety of training contexts.

***Improving Communication/Coordination Between Institutions and Sectors.*** Champions express the conviction that employing these techniques will build essential bridges with government agencies, universities and community-based groups. Repeatedly those interviewed recognize the importance of learning across borders – literally national boundaries, such as comparing land policy from one country to the next – but also the boundaries that separate different institutions. Several see added value to their own organizations from better cross-organizational coordination. Whether in terms of effectiveness through more “harmonized synergy” or more fundamentally in reducing duplication of effort, improving communication and information-sharing are viewed as important attributes to carry forward.

***Management Insights.*** Whether in the context of working across different institutions, or even within their own organizations, Champions reflect on the opportunity to **coordinate** better and **manage** their own performance more effectively. Some even suggest that money is not the problem, nor a lack of knowledge, but rather that it is the management that is missing.

***Independent Thinking and Practical Action.*** Champions stress the need for practical, achievable ways forward. They see value in exploiting the power of the training that creates **independent thinkers and actors** who can take practical action in the interest of food security and potentially overcome “policy for policy’s sake”. One route to rectify this disconnect between policy intent and policy implementation is to proactively inform and educate. Champions suggest more emphasis on economic literacy and policy analysis broken down and conveyed in accessible terminology and context. This will enable more actors throughout the agricultural sector to work constructively to common ends.

***Demystifying CAADP.*** Champions appreciate the greater understanding gained about CAADP through the Africa Lead experience. Going forward, they see the need to “demystify CAADP” for others in agricultural value chain. Considering how many report that the Africa Lead training enlightened them on CAADP, they see this as something that deserves to be more widely shared. In part, the Champions take this as their mission. The news media are viewed as another important channel for reaching key constituencies, such as farmers and farmer-based organizations.

When reflecting on the real promise of CAADP objectives to bring food security to the continent, Champions view challenges as problems that are solvable. They credit the Africa Lead experience with both enlightenment on these challenges and the tools to devise workable remedies.

Transformative leadership and management training holds this potential because it addresses an important gap identified by Champions from every country. This is the gap between high level agriculture sector planning and the *empowerment* of ordinary people to mobilize to advance food security at sub-national, national or regional levels. As was initially hoped of the Africa Lead program in 2010, the methodology is highly effective at stimulating the development of leaders who are motivated and capable of engaging with their national governments to drive transformations in their countries’ food sectors.

Scaling comes from continuing to apply the transformative thrust and diversity principles to consolidate norms of engagement across sectors. This will transcend adversarial and/or hierarchical relational structures that now hold back agriculture systems and generate common frames of reference whereby stakeholders from different sectors begin to perceive themselves as working together toward the same goals.

At the same time, processes are needed to ensure quality control and continuous upgrading of the capacity of trainers. Provision of this support and quality control could be an important point of intersection between regional CAADP organizations and organizations mainstreaming CAADP at the national level.