

**Critique of baseline conditions of the Third National Fadama Development Project in
Kogi State : Beneficiaries' perspective**

Abstract

The study reviewed the baseline conditions of the third National Fadama Development Project in Kogi State from beneficiaries' perspective. The synthesis was based on interview with 100 randomly selected members of Fadama resource users, focus group discussion and official document of the project. Majority (71.0%) of the respondents were males, married (88.0%), household size of seven persons and mean age of 45 years. The study revealed several shortfalls and gaps in the planning, execution and management of the Project. The approach of the Project though supposedly community driven seems not to accommodate priority needs of the farmers because the farmers were probably not actively represented in the planning of the project. The Fadama farmers did not benefit from the Agricultural Development Program (ADP) Support and Adaptive Research component and the advisory service was not demand responsive as designed to be. Moreover, money allocated for the maintenance of the project was more than the money for the execution of the project activities. The study recommends that development planners should evolve appropriate and stringent measures to ensure effective monitoring; and increased involvement of the beneficiaries and other stakeholders in the planning and implementation of development project. The design of project should be flexible to accommodate various geographical peculiarities. Development intervention should be gender sensitive with specific projects and funds for women and the vulnerable.

Key words: Baseline, fadama, Fadama association, fadama user groups, development project.

Introduction

The National Fadama Development Program (NFDP) came on board as a result of the success recorded by the small scale irrigation projects carried out by the Agricultural Development Programs (ADPs) in fadama areas. "Fadama" is a Hausa name for irrigable land usually low-lying plains underlay by shallow aquifers found along Nigeria's major river systems. The programme was implemented in successive phases (1,11 and 111 phases) with

each phase designed and equipped with measures to make up for the shortfalls experienced in previous one.

Fadama III project is a follow up to the successful Fadama II project. The development objective is to sustainably increase the incomes of fadama users. [1]. One of the key features of the project is to empower the communities to collectively decide on how resources are allocated and managed for their livelihood activities and to participate in the design and execution of their sub-projects. Unlike the first and second phases of the Project, Fadama III introduced new components(public ADP and adaptive research support) and several sub-components (sustainable land management, Fadama User Equity Fund etc.).

Moreover, Fadama III also has a stronger emphasis on production through its ADP support and research, as well as demand-driven advisory services and input support. The project set a goal of increasing agricultural productivity by 60 percent, a goal that was not set explicitly under fadama II [2]. It employs community demand- driven approach which emphasised and promotes beneficiaries' participation and ownership of subprojects from inception, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Generally, the approach agrees with current policies and development strategies in Nigeria which emphasizes poverty reduction, private sector leadership and beneficiary participation (<http://www.fadama.org/>). Besides, experience from past development programmes shows that active participation of target groups is one of the key factors and determinants of effectiveness of interventions in realizing the set objectives. Therefore, with greater expectation from Fadama III project, explained by the loadable objectives, coverage and expanded components or activities, concern on the gap between theory and practice becomes pertinent. Thus, the study critique the baseline conditions of the project, exploring on the views and experiences of beneficiaries; and official documents.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Kogi State. Kogi State is located in the North-Central (Middle-Belt) geo-political zone of Nigeria at Longitudes 5°, 22'E to 7°, 49'E and Latitude 6°, 33'N to 8°, 44'N. It covers an estimated 29,833 square kilometers and a population of about

66 3,314,043 (NPC 2006 census). The twenty five local areas in the state participated in the
67 project.

68 Multistage random sampling technique was used in selecting the beneficiaries. In the
69 first stage a total of 5 local government areas (LGAs) out of the twenty local government areas
70 participating in fadama III were randomly selected using simple random sampling techniques.
71 The LGAs were Adavi, Mopamuro, Kabba-bunnu, Idah and Kogi. In the second stage one
72 Fadama Community Association (FCA) which is the apex organizations of about 15 Fadama
73 users groups (FUGs) were randomly selected by simple random techniques from each of the
74 five (5) LGAs, giving a total of 5 FCAs. The third stage involved purposive selection of two
75 FUGs with at least 10 FUG members from each FCA, giving a total of 10 FUGs. This was
76 based on functional FUGs. Finally, 10 FUG members were selected by simple random
77 techniques from each of the selected FUGs. A total of 100 beneficiaries participated in group
78 discussion. The study relied on the baseline condition of the Third National Fadama
79 Development Project as stipulated in the official document as well as information from focus
80 group discussion. The respondents indicated their ages (years), sex (male and female),
81 educational level, household size (number of persons), years of farming experience (years) and
82 others

83

84 Respondents' socio-economic characteristics

85 Sex

86 Figure 1 shows that majority (71.0%) of the respondents were males, while 29.0% were
87 females. This indicates a dominance of male folks as beneficiaries in Fadama III Project. The
88 result agrees with the findings of [3] who reported that fadama III farmers in Delta State were
89 predominantly men (55%) as opposed to women who made up 45%. This is surprising
90 because the scope of Fadama III Project was enlarge to include the rural poor engaged in
91 economic activities (farmers, pastoralists, fishermen, nomads, traders, processors, hunters and
92 gatherers as well as other economic interest groups), the disadvantaged groups (widows, the
93 handicapped, the sick and other vulnerable groups, including people living with HIV/AIDS and
94 unemployed youth which are areas dominated by women. It could be as a result of the

traditionally poor resource status of women and limited access to credit which is supposed to have been taken care by group approach adopted in the project. The low participation of women may undermine one of the objectives of the project targeted to reduce poverty especially by targeting female household members because they increase propensity to lift households out of poverty [4]

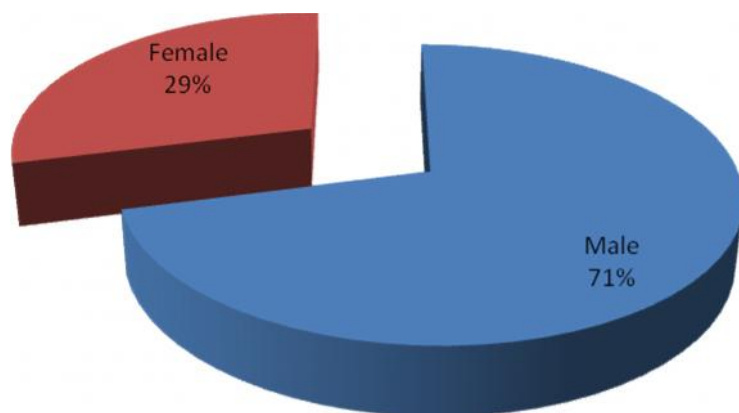


Figure 1: Percentage distribution of respondents by sex

Age (years)

The average age of the respondents was 45years. A greater proportion (57%) were between the age category of 41 and 50 years while, 20% and 16% were within the age ranges of 31-40 and 51-60 years respectively. Only 4% and 3% were within age bracket of 0-30 and 61-70 years. This shows that majority of the respondents were still within middle age as well as active years. It also implies that they are matured enough to make rational decisions concerning improved technologies of Fadama III Project since age could influence productivity and farm decision making process [5]. The low participation of youths in the project portends fear on the continuity of the subprojects; it could be as a result of youth's negative attitude toward agriculture as a practice for school drop-outs and illiterates [6]. There is need to create incentives to attract the youth into the project

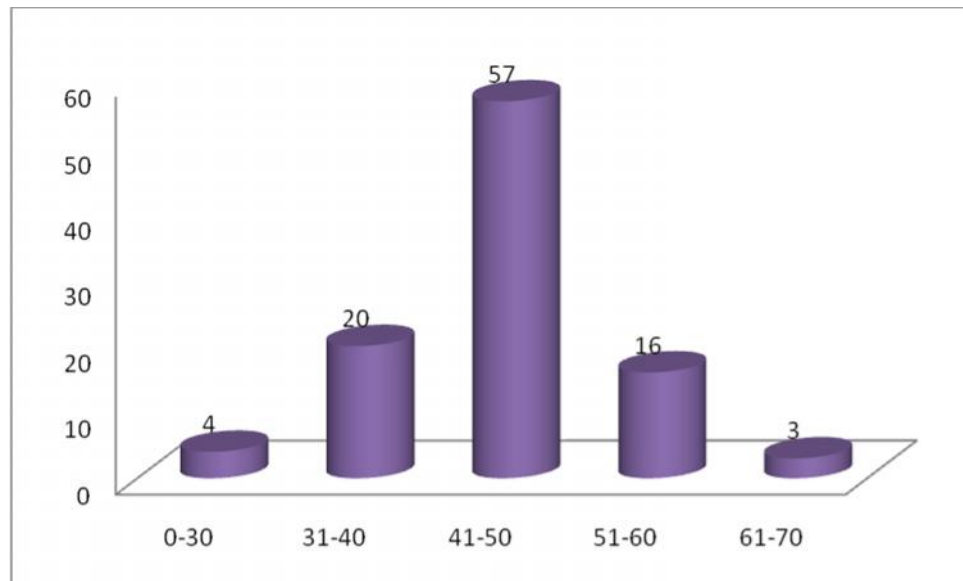


Figure 2: Percentage distribution of respondents according to age.

Marital Status

Majority (88%) of the beneficiaries were married and 8% widowed. While a lesser proportion 3% and 1% were single and divorced, respectively. This agrees with the findings of Jibowo (1999) that the vast majority of the adult population of any society consists of married people. This is encouraging given the expectation that the Project will also reach at least 2 million indirect beneficiary households, as members of the Fadama communities not benefiting directly from subprojects [4]. However, the low percentage of the widowed indicates a low level of participation of the vulnerable in fadama III implementation in Kogi State despite the design to ensure their active participation.

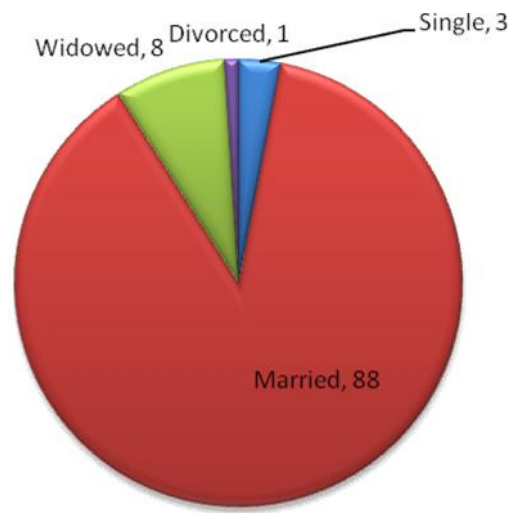


Figure3: Percentage distribution of respondent according to marital status

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148 Educational level

149 Table 1 shows that 28% of the beneficiaries completed their secondary education, 19%
150 had OND/NCE qualifications, 15% had HND/First degree. Only 7% had no formal education.
151 Majority (93%) of the beneficiaries of the project are literate. It is an advantage for effective
152 running and management of the project particularly between the facilitators and farmers. It
153 might also make for sustainability and maintenance of productive assets and fadama users
154 equity fund which if not properly handled could constitute conflicts, given the culture of
155 ownership in Nigeria. Education also has been known to be a factor in the adoption of modern
156 practices as it is generally considered an important variable that could enhance farmers'
157 adoption of new technology.

158 Household size

159 Majority (58%) of the respondents had household size of between 6 and 10 persons,
160 while 26%, 13% and 1% had household size of 1-5, 11-15, and 16-20 persons, respectively.
161 The average household size was 7 persons. Relatively the beneficiaries had large household
162 size which characterizes most rural households. According to Oladoja, Adisa, Adekun (2008),
163 this is obtainable in societies where little mechanization is practiced and most economic
164 production activities are carried out manually, so that the number of hands available
165 determines the productivity of the family. It is possible that most of the beneficiaries depend on
166 family labour for their agricultural activities.

167 Years of farming experience

168 The average farming experience of the respondents was 23 years. A greater proportion
169 (57%) had farming experience of between 31 and 40 years, while 20% had farming experience
170 of between 31 and 40 years.. Only 4% had experience of less than 30 years. The result shows
171 that majority of the respondents had remarkable farming experience. This suggests that the
172 project captured experienced and active farmers as beneficiaries. This agrees with the objective
173 of the project which targeted rural communities who are predominantly farmers.

174

175 Major occupation

176 The major occupation of the respondents was farming (46%), while 27%, 19%, 9%
 177 were engaged in civil servants, trading and transporters, respectively. In other words 54% of
 178 the beneficiaries were part- time farmers. This is in tandem with the objective of the project.
 179 Hence the objective to increase productivity and income through training/information,
 180 provision of productive assets and rural infrastructure will be acceptable to the groups. There is
 181 likely going to be increase response and high acceptability of the project activities and
 182 packages that could boost production.

183 **Table 1: Percentage distribution of respondents by socio-economic characteristics**

Categories	%(n=100)	Mean
Educational level:		
No formal education	7.0	
Primary school attempted	9.0	
Primary school completed	6.0	
Secondary school attempted	10.0	
Secondary school completed	28.0	
OND/NCE	19.0	
HND/First degree	15.0	
Higher degrees (M.Sc/Ph.D)	3.0	
Household size:		
1-5	26.0	
6-10	58.0	
11-15	13.0	7.0
16-20	1.0	
Major occupation		
Farming	46.0	
Civil service	27.0	
Trading	19.0	
Artisans	3.0	
Transporters	6.0	
Clergy	1.0	
Years of farming experience		23.4
< 30	4	
31-40	20	
41-50	57	
51-60		

Sources of information

Table 2 shows that 72% of the beneficiaries got agricultural information from radio, 58% and 43% from facilitators and buyers, respectively. Others sourced information via fellow farmers (38%), television(30%), friends and neighbours (22%). A lesser proportion (18% and 13%) of the respondents sourced from ADP/ ministry of agriculture, and family members respectively. Radio was the major source of information to the Fadama III beneficiaries. This could be as a result of the wide coverage of radio as mass media channel of information flow. Another reason could be because majority of the respondents had radio in their homes and is the major source information for the rural communities. Ideally, facilitators are supposed to be the major source of their information due to their involvement and closeness to the farmers. Structurally the project is designed such that the facilitators live in the community and preferably speak the local language of the people [4]. They are to guide farmers in developing local development plan, choice of subproject, provide technical training and market information to the beneficiaries. In fact, the type and nature of their responsibilities should keep them at regular contact and interaction with farmers and as such the major source of agricultural information.

Table 2: Percentage distribution of respondents by sources of information (n=100)

Source of information:	%
Radio	72.0
Television	30.0
Friends/neighbours	22.0
ADP/Ministry of Agric	18.0
Family members	13.0
Fellow farmers	38.0
Buyers	43.0
Facilitators	58.0

***Multiple response**

Farmers' group/cooperatives

Entries in table 3 show that a large proportion (85%) of fadama farmer belongs to other groups and cooperatives while 15% belonged only to fadama user groups. The respondents indicated membership of credit cooperatives (49%), marketing cooperative society.(43%)

208 multipurpose (41%) and production cooperative societies (21%). Reasons deduced for
 209 belonging to more than one groups range from benefits such as diffusion of information, access
 210 to loans and other input. Those who did not belong to any other group attributed it to much
 211 the fadama user groups were already existing groups or combination of membership from
 212 existing farmer/producers associations. Use of group approach is not a new phenomenon in
 213 development programmes among the rural people, so many farmers are already members of
 214 one or two. It enable farmers to enjoy economy of scale and one voice on programmes and
 215 policies that affect their lives. However, it may foster poor commitment of members, and
 216 inefficiency or death of some groups.

217 **Table 3: Percentage distribution of respondents by membership of farmers'**
 218 **groups/cooperatives (n=100)**

Farmers'	%
group/cooperative*	
Yes	85.0
No	15.0
Other group/cooperative	
Production	28.0
Multipurpose	41.0
Marketing	43.0
Credit/thrift	49.0

219 ***Multiple responses**
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222 **4.2. Critic of the baseline conditions of the Third National Fadama Development Project**

223 **Project objective**

224 The development objective of Fadama III Project is for the fadama farmers to acquire
 225 capital assets which should be used to undertake a wide range of small-scale income generating
 226 activities [4]. The project aspires to increase the income of users of rural land and water

resources on a sustainable basis, help reduce rural poverty, increase food security and contribute to the achievement of key Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This is in line with the nations' development goals of moving the country out of poverty, malnutrition and food insecurity with particular interest on rural areas where agriculture (subsistence level) is the main source of livelihood. The project is expected to increase productivity and income of farmers by 60% and subsequently leads to improved standard of living. Obviously, this is a **loadable** goal to revamp the agriculture, boost farmers morale; and address the increasing challenges of feeding the population and alleviating rural poverty. However, report suggests that the small-scale income generating activities of the fadama III Project has not help to reduce the subsistent level of farming. Production is still highly subsistence with household consumption as the major production goal. The little proportion sold may not be substantial for tangible change in income and standard of living

Project approach

The Project is anchored on the Community Driven Development (CDD) approach. Community organizations decide on how the resources are allocated among the priorities identified by the group and they manage the funds. This is contrary to the top down approach that characterized past development efforts in agriculture. It is in response to highly popularized participatory, community demand driven and mainstreaming approaches in policy discourse. Practically, this is not the case on the field. The Project implementation unit (PIU) and facilitators wield a lot of influence on the activities of the FCAs including their choice of subproject and the location of their community infrastructures. For instance, most of the widows' group in the study area confided in the researcher that their choice subproject was rental business as non-farm income generating activity but the facilitators turned them down because it is not an agricultural based business. Most of the marketing enterprises were equally not approved because according to the PIU members, the project will not give any group money to buy tubers of yams, bags of beans or basket of tomatoes to sell". The consequence is that such groups would agree on another project usually suggested by the facilitators so that they do not loose- out totally from the "national cake". Unfortunately, the beneficiaries revealed that most of such subprojects never functioned. Meanwhile the design of the Project that contractors be employed in the activities of the FCAs/FUGs was not totally approved by

the farmers. Community infrastructures such as the construction of market shed gendered some conflict. Some bricklayers among the FCA/FUG objected to contracting the job out because they felt that members could handle the job better. . The same applies to the sites of some community project such as borehole, market sheds. Most times the reason for the inappropriate sitting of project is the insistence of the project for land papers aimed to avoid future conflict on the land for whatever community project. But the community believes that “this is our land you can build the infrastructure anywhere”. When finally the community does the bidding of the project, most times the location is not suitable for the community.. These scenario undermine the supposed community driven development (CDD) approach of the Fadama III Project.

Target beneficiaries

The Project’s target groups include: (a) the rural poor engaged in economic activities (farmers, pastoralists, fishermen, nomads, traders, processors, hunters and gatherers as well as other economic interest groups); (b) the disadvantaged groups (widows, the handicapped, the sick and other vulnerable groups, including people living with HIV/AIDS and unemployed youth; and (c) service providers, including government agencies, private operators, and professional/semi-professional associations operating in the project areas. Although their influence may have been disproportionate to their participation, women made up just about two in every ten members of fadama users group. Moreover, no sub-projects were chosen based on women’s priorities alone or earmark basically for the disadvantaged. These two target groups, including the youths are not properly represented. Chabeuf, Toledano, Bouarfa, Neighbor (2004) suggest that in future projects, project management could earmark a portion of grant funds for women’s projects. These could also be extended to the disadvantaged groups and the youths.

Demand-responsive advisory services

This was put in place to provide advisory services that enable fadama user adopt output enhancing techniques and more profitable marketing practices in their fadama enterprises. This component has relevant benefits for the beneficiaries especially the fact that it should encourage new techniques to farm practices. But from field survey, the beneficiaries reiterate that advisory services were usually rendered long before the FCAs commence the operation of their enterprises. Consequently, most of the farmers often fail to apply the knowledge gained

during the advisory service training. Also the document of the World Bank (2008) stated that the choice of activities or training needs rest solely on the FCAs, but it was revealed that the choice of the areas of needs are not usually determined by the FCAs but by the advisory service providers who design some general topics, their relevance notwithstanding, and teach them to the various FCAs across the State. Therefore most of the subprojects do not experience output enhancing technologies and more profitable marketing practices which the advisory services is supposed to help achieve in their fadama enterprises. Example cases of pig pen poorly built in a traditional pattern as non- fadama beneficiaries would have done were reported and observed. Also the operation of the pig farm had no modern touch signifying lack or low knowledge and skill of improved technology and technical know- how in piggery production. It also cast doubt on the effectiveness of participatory, community demand driven and monitoring approach adopted in the implementation of the project.

Agricultural Development Program (ADP) Support and Adaptive Research

The component was seconded to the Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) by Fadama III Project and it supports demand driven adaptive research meant to demonstrate new technologies that address the beneficiary's needs. This is designed to be achieved through sponsored research and on-farm demonstrations. Also under this component, fadama III supports the public agricultural extension services in the participating LGAs by providing on-the-job training so that they can provide quality assurance to privately- hired advisory service providers, training to facilitators and demand driven advisory services But as it is, the beneficiaries reported that they did not enjoy this service. The extension agents were reported to have absconded from their duty post because of lack/poor payment of allowances. Invariably this boils down to the financing system of ADP. The programmes is poorly funded even with involvement of the federal, state, and local governments. The ADP was initiated by and has continued to be maintained by external funds. The recent funds have come in the form of projects such as the Sasakawa Global 2000, the Special Programme on Food Security (SPFS) and the National Fadama Project. Again, this is a serious missing link in the whole process.

319 **Fadama Users' Equity Fund (FUEF)**

320 Fadama users' equity fund was put in place to ensure the sustainability of the
321 subproject beyond 2013 when the Fadama III would elapse. The establishment of Fadama user
322 equity fund involves that the FCAs/FUGs open savings account where they would remit some
323 cash on regular basis. The Project purposed that FUEF reserve could grow into a cooperative
324 that would enable the FCA/FUG members access loan to further the economic activities of
325 their various groups. The FUEF is a lofty proposal but its success is yet to be proved because
326 the group approach to asset ownership practiced by Fadama III is not a common practice in
327 Nigeria and Africa at large. Though, the operation of FUEF is based on guidelines outlined in
328 its operational manual and integrated into the project implementation manual, the farmers
329 expressed fears and mistrust in the members. The unanswered question has always been" who
330 would inherit the assets when they are no longer on the scene?. Possibly this accounts for the
331 poor disposition of some members and why they readily share the profit made from the
332 enterprises.

333 **Financial package**

334 A fundamental problem that rocked the first FCAs in the implementation of sub project
335 was funding. The financial package allotted to the various groups was very small. The total of
336 \$14,813.333 (N2, 222,000.00) spread over the 15 groups gave about N148, 150.00 at most to
337 each group for asset acquisition and input support. Groups that needed to put some form of
338 structures such as poultry house and pig pen in place could not be sufficiently mobilized due to
339 the meager amounts. Subsequently, these lapses were revealed in the erection of structures that
340 were primitive and unworthy to be presented as World Bank assisted projects. The
341 insufficiencies of funds were also responsible for the inability of most groups to purchase
342 enough inputs such as feed for their livestock. Some of the enterprises became non- functional
343 after awhile. Meanwhile, it was observed that the overhead cost of the project is more than
344 what is allocated to the project proper (farmers). This is evident in the cost of putting the State
345 Fadama Coordination Office in place, the procurement of furniture for the Local Fadama Desk
346 Offices and the monitoring visits to the field by the members of the projecting implementation
347 unit. Although the State and local government counterpart funds designed to be paid yearly

348 throughout the life span of the Project was supposed to make up for these allowances but the
349 counterpart funds were not remitted regularly.

350 **Project implementing unit/facilitators**

351 Members of the project implementation unit (PIU) comprised of staff in the
352 monitoring/evaluation, communication , environment/land management , procurement, audit,
353 finance, community development/gender equality, training/technical assistance, rural
354 finance/livelihood units and the office of the State project coordinator. The facilitators are on
355 the field in direct contact with the farmers. The experience of the Kogi State project
356 implementation unit was a huge factor in the quality of the fadama subproject. The emphasis of
357 the PIU on the initial FCAs established was on quantity, that is going the number of FUGs (15-
358 25)/FCAs. However subsequent subprojects were better executed because of the reduced
359 number of the groups (7-10FUGs/FCA). The PIU also initiated the fadama village idea where
360 all the fadama subprojects under an FCA were located in a common site. This means that each
361 monthly facilitator's forum comes with some innovation or improvement on previous ideas.
362 The facilitators confessed that the frequent changes gave them a run for their money because
363 conveying the innovation to the farmers was quite involving.

364 **Conclusion**

365 The study established that the Fadama III Project has not sustainably helped the
366 nation out of its subsistence level of farming. The approach of the Project though, community
367 driven seems not to accommodate priority needs of the farmers, because the farmers did not
368 functionally participate in the planning of the project. The Fadama farmers did not benefit from
369 the Agricultural Development Program (ADP) Support and Adaptive Research component and
370 their advisory service was not demand responsive as it was designed to be. The money
371 allocated to the maintenance of the project was more than the money for the execution of the
372 Project. The sustainability of a FUEF account is doubtful because of the aura that surrounds the
373 ownership of assets by groups, a practice not common to Africa where inheritance is a vital
374 issue. The vulnerable including women, unemployed youths and people living with HIV/AIDS
375 are either not adequately represented or not represented at all. There should be increased and
376 functional involvement of farmers, facilitators and other stakeholders in the planning and

implementation of project. Planners and policy makers should ensure flexibility in the design of projects to accommodate various geographical peculiarities and make provision for necessary adjustment or change in the field. Interventions should earmark sub-projects specifically for women and the vulnerable to foster inclusion and wide impact of programme.

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