



khanya-aicdd
African Institute for Community-Driven Development

**Learning about action
learning:
database of selected
initiatives**

December 2007

**Khanya-African Institute for
Community-Driven Development
(Khanya-aicdd)**

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Rahel Otieno

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Khanya-aicdd's vision is to be a world class Institute making a major contribution to sustainable development in Africa. Our mission is to promote sustainable livelihoods and community-driven development to address poverty in Africa.

To do this we work in action-learning processes linking government, communities, civil society and business, providing advice, facilitation, action research, implementation, sharing of experience and training, while drawing from global development thinking.

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Glossary

CBO	Community-based organisation
CBP	Community-based planning
CBW	Community-based worker
CFA	Community forestry advisor
CSDT	Chivi South Development Trust (Zimbabwe)
DDP	District Development Programme
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DFID(-SA) UK	Department for International Development (South Africa)
DFO	District Forestry Officer (Uganda)
DFS	District Forest Services (Uganda)
DOL	Department of Labour (South Africa)
dplg	Department of Provincial and Local Government (South Africa)
EPWP	Extended Public Works Programme (South Africa)
FA	Facilitating agent
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FDS	Fiscal Decentralisation Strategy
GoU	Government of Uganda
HPPG	Harmonised Participatory Planning Guide (Uganda)
IDP	Integrated Development Plan (South Africa)
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
ISRDS	Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (South Africa)
ITDG	Intermediate Technology Development Group, now Practical Action
Khanya-aicdd	Khanya-African Institute for Community-Driven Development
LAL	Learning about action learning
LDPW	Limpopo Province Department of Public Works
LG	Local government
LGDP	Local Government Development Programme (Uganda)
LIRRMP	Labour Intensive Rural Roads Maintenance Programme
LITE	Labour Intensive Training & Engineering
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MFPED	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (Uganda)
MLGPWNH	Ministry of Local Government, National Housing and Public Works (Uganda)
MoF	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (Uganda)
MoGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (Uganda)
MoLG	Ministry of Local Government (Uganda)
MoPS	Ministry of Public Service (Uganda)
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
MTR	Mid-Term Review
MWLE	Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment (Uganda)
NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory Services (Uganda)
PGDS	Provincial Growth and Development Strategy (South Africa)
RAL	Roads Agency Limpopo (PTY) Ltd

Introduction

This database contains a collection of project profiles that were reviewed for the learning about action-learning research project. Each profile is based on a case study, and has been structured to enable comparison across the different case studies. The profiles also draw out different approaches being used for reflective learning, which are not unique and have been adapted to suit the contexts they are working in.

As far as possible, each profile covers details on the context, country, author(s) & publisher, description, methodology, achievements (impact), lessons learnt, facilitating agent(s), contact information and website

Community-based worker project

Context	A key challenge to achieving the Millennium Development Goals is the ability to reach a lot more people within the limited financial resources available, to respond to widespread need, and to offer services that significantly improve, people's quality of life, particularly poor people. This represents a significant challenge to policy-makers and programme designers, governments and NGOs involved in service delivery. Community-based services offer the potential for achieving this and an opportunity for communities to influence services to meet their locally-specific needs and to monitor the performance of delivery agents.
Country	South Africa; Lesotho; Kenya; Uganda 2004 – 2007
Author (s) & publisher	Khanya-aicdd
Description	The 4-country community-based worker (CBW) project focused on promoting dispersed, active and locally accountable community workers who can work in a wide range of sectors addressing frequently needed services, which can best be delivered locally.
Methodology	The CBW project was designed to follow an action learning cycle: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • initially beginning with securing commitment to the critical problem to be addressed , • learning from experiences around CBW worker systems and empowering communities in the process, • testing and evaluating an improved approach which would reveal further issues that needed attention • the cycle is then repeated through a continuous process of action and critical reflection.
Achievements (impact)	In the health sector, some achievements included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased understanding of health, disease, nutrition and hygiene, increased adherence to treatment resulting in improved health outcomes and beneficiaries reporting significant psychosocial support. <p>In the natural resources sector, some of the benefits (although few statistical data were available) of this project included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adoption of new technologies, replanting of trees, income from sales of seedlings, fruits and honey, improved livestock management, improved soil conservation, and greater understanding of land use rights. <p>For the CBWs themselves, some of the benefits from being part of this project included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • satisfaction of being of service to their community, increased knowledge, skills and confidence, greater status in their community; increased income (for those who received stipends) and gifts in kind such as tools or farming inputs.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piloting organisations started considering the CBW project as an opportunity to improve internal documentation and share best practices. • Partner organisations increased their conceptual understanding of CBW systems and also working within an action learning framework.
Lessons learnt	<p>About action-learning processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential stakeholders need to be brought into dialogue at an early stage as possible. • Multi-stakeholder approaches require efficient and structured project management. • Loss of stakeholders and individuals within the action learning process is disruptive and slows the process due to the loss of institutional capacity and memory. • An action learning project needs to have direction but there needs to be a balance between a robust project design and how emerging practice and learning may influence the rollout of the project. • There should be adequate financial resources, institutional structures and capacity to support what can be quite an unpredictable process. • Fora, events and mechanisms for reflection and sharing need to be structured into the initial project design in order to promote the importance of review and reflection as an explicit part of the work
Facilitating agent(s)	Khanya-aicdd National CBW Steering Committees in Uganda, South Africa, Kenya and Lesotho
Contact information	Patrick Mbulu – Email: Patrick@khanya-aicdd.org
Website	http://www.khanya-aicdd.org
Case Study	http://www.khanya-aicdd.org/photo_root/publications/LAL_4Country_CBW_Casestudy.pdf

Keywords

Kenya; Lesotho; South Africa; Uganda; action-learning; Pro-poor service delivery; Community-based workers; Community-based workers action learning; Community-based planning; Community-based reflection; Community-based workers implementation; Community-based workers planning

Chivi Food Security Project

Context	In 1990 ITDG (now Practical Action) decided to introduce a food security programme in Zimbabwe to contribute to addressing the hunger and food shortages faced by many of the subsistence farmers in communal areas. Zimbabwe was an agro-based economy and 70% of the people were based in these communal areas. ITDG was keen to explore ways in which improved agricultural practice could contribute to improving livelihoods. The project's inception also arose out of discussions between senior Agricultural, Technical and Extension Services officials and ITDG, about the need to explore alternative strategies and technologies for agricultural extension in the communal areas.
Country	Zimbabwe
Author (s) & publisher	Nicholas Mudungwe
Description	The Chivi Food Security Project was initiated in 1990 by ITDG as a response to persistent, localised chronic food insecurity in the area. Its main goal was to realise the potential of the communities to identify and manage their own development process. It drew on the expertise and experience of a range of stakeholders to develop soil and water conservation technologies that could assist with increasing household food security. In the process the Chivi project influenced the reorganization of agricultural development services in Zimbabwe.
Methodology	A process of project formulation through understanding and responding to the local economic, social, political and institutional context and dynamics, which took six months, involved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at the micro level, ITDG staff conducted a series of dialogues with communities in Chivi to develop an understanding of critical stakeholders who could contribute to the project. • various surveys undertaken to build a solid base of information that would help the project team better understand the community's social, economic and political dynamics. • extensive discussions held to determine the project's key components and particular activities to be undertaken.
Achievements (impacts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of technologies adopted by farmers in ward 21 of Chivi have remained a permanent physical feature • Availability of water has significantly improved at certain sites because of rock catchments water harvesting • Estimates that over 85% of farmers in ward 21 of Chivi were practicing soil and water conservation of one form or another. • An increase in the varieties and species of field and food crops within Chivi on a yearly basis • There's been an increase in demand for agro-processing technologies e.g. peanut butter processing • Provincial Agritex staff were trained in the use of participatory extension approaches and become a key vehicle in spreading this practice throughout Chivi and Masvingo.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening of grassroots institutions has improved the local governance arrangements at community level • Community members have internalised the skills and knowledge to the extent of being invited by other communities locally and regionally to train them at a fee • The number of farmers' clubs and garden groups in Ward 21 doubled with increased membership each year. • Increased participation in the affairs of local institutions also increased the participation of the community in project activities.
Lessons learnt	<p>Lessons learnt about exit, upscaling and replication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building real partnerships with communities facilitates sustainability. • Strengthening and investing in local institutions as part of the intervention will enable initiatives to be maintained and developed after outsiders have left. • Involve critical government players throughout the process. • Training that focuses on leadership and cooperation enhances community resilience • The absence of significant external material support reduces the risk of the project stalling with the exit of facilitating agencies like ITDG. <p>Lessons learnt about action-learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Material incentives are not always necessary to encourage participation, commitment and a sense of responsibility. • A comprehensive needs assessment will help build the foundations of an effective action learning intervention • Any proposed action learning intervention has to focus on priority issues for the community • Learning and sharing must be given high status. • Facilitators need to invest in building relationships with stakeholders. • Facilitator competencies should not be underestimated. • An action-learning approach can build the confidence and resourcefulness of poorer farmers.
Facilitating agent(s)	ITDG, now known as Practical Action - Zimbabwe
Contact information	Nicholas Mudungwe Nicholas.mudungwe@practicalaction.org.zw
Website	http://www.practicalaction.org.zw

Keywords:

Chivi Food Security; Training for Transformation; Agricultural extension planning
 Agricultural extension action learning; Agricultural extension training; Technical process;
 Conservation technologies; Household food security; Farmer institutions; Local government
 institutions: Local government planning; Local government training; Zimbabwe

Community-based planning (CBP)

Context	Undertaking development planning requires an understanding of the development process as well as planning skills. Implicit to the concept of development planning is the need for learning through doing so that mistakes of the past are not repeated. Community-based planning (CBP) is a form of participatory planning which has been designed to promote community action.
Country	South Africa; Zimbabwe, Uganda & Ghana 2004 – 2007
Author & publisher	Khanya-aicdd
Description	Regional partners who were interested to see how to operationalise decentralisation at the community level came together in April 2001, to inform the planning of an action-research project. Their work focused on how to link citizens more effectively with the state through a participatory planning system linked to the local government planning system. The key partners in each country included national government departments, local government structures, NGOs or other organisations working with participatory planning.
Methodology	<p>A core methodology was developed across by partners at an initial cross-country workshop and adapted in each country. A similar process was held in all of the other countries although the actual implementation of the CBP pilots varied according to the developmental context within each country</p> <p>Project activities included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-country review processes of the status of CBP (Apr-Jun 2001) • Cross-country workshop in South Africa to share learning (Aug 2001) • Development of core methodology and manual (Sept 2001) • Study tours to India (Sept 2001) and Bolivia (May 2002) • Adaptation of manuals in each country • Piloting in each country (Sept 2001-Mar 2002) • Workshop to share learning (Jul 2002) • Implementation across the whole of 6 local government areas (Oct 2001+) • Dissemination of findings in country and internationally (on-going) • Proposals for changes to methods, systems and policies (Oct 2002) • Final reports by country and across the countries (Nov 2002)
Achievements (impacts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Zimbabwe there was evidence of increased uptake of food production and diversification technologies by vulnerable socio-economic groups; local communities came up with local risk management strategies such as local food aid systems. • According to Ugandan Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) reports, between 2003 to 2006 social service indicators improved in the area in which CBP was applied, which can partly be attributed to social investments influenced by improved bottom-up planning through the HPPG. Also policy influencing was able to occur because the Policy

	<p>and Planning Unit in the Ministry of Local Government championed the HPPG.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In South Africa the CBP project led to a change in policy through the National Policy Framework for Public Participation which was heavily influenced by the CBP process. Additionally, CBP is now included as a mandatory part of the curricula/ modules that ward committees in South Africa undergo. Significant improvement of local capacities within all of the countries.
Lessons learnt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sequencing of tools and decisions about which to use is critical. • Developing a learning framework before the actual initiation of the project is an absolute must. • The CBP process requires the support of local governance structures and opinion leaders in the community • Good facilitation is essential to ensure the correct implementation of the project • Ownership and commitment needs to be focused on institutions as opposed to individuals.
Facilitating agent(s)	Khanya-aicdd
Contact information	Ian Goldman. Email: goldman@khanya-aicdd.org
Website	http://www.khanya-aicdd.org
Case study	http://www.khanya-aicdd.org/photo_root/publications/LAL_CBP_Casestudy.pdf

Keywords:

Community-based planning; Uganda: South Africa; Ghana; Zimbabwe; Local government
 Local government planning; Local government decentralisation; Local government
 restructuring; Decentralisation: Decentralisation processes: Decentralisation planning

Enhancing farmer-led research and extension in south-western Uganda

Context (When, Where, Country, Region)	Kabale District, South-western Uganda, East Africa
Author (s) & publisher	C. Opondo, L. German, A. Stroud and O. Engorok African Highlands Initiative (AHI) Working Papers #3 2006
Description	Uganda's National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) was set up to provide support services on enterprise development and Natural Resource Management for farmer groups. Within this program, the African Highlands Initiative (AHI) was responsible for supporting farmer groups to develop visions, action plans and improving their ability to prioritise enterprise for themselves. A number of steps were designed and used in implementation and monitoring of progress.
Methodology	The approach used : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AHI hired 20 facilitators' to interact with more than 400 groups in Rubaya sub-county. • A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between AHI and the local government in Rubaya sub-county to perform certain tasks as indicated in a work plan and budget. • AHI recruits 20 community facilitators who were trained and supported to work with farmers. • Inventory of 400 farmer groups taken as basis for baseline information on existing and functional social groups • Community meetings held with farmer groups to discuss aspects of the NAADS program. • Groups led through participatory visioning, planning, enterprise selection and work plan development. • Evaluate the process to work out lessons learned and propose suggestions for way forward
Achievements	Through farmer groups and farmer fora, communities are taking on new roles and expectations with enthusiasm, although competencies in group management, agro-enterprise development and monitoring of the implementation processes are still needed. A coalition of research and development partners has been formed to strengthen local organisation to enable farmers better 'own' the development process.
Facilitating agent(s)	NAADS – National Agricultural Advisory Services AHI – African Highlands Initiative
Contact information	C. Opondo, Research Fellow, African Highlands Initiative, Box 26416, Kampala, Uganda. Email: German, L. - SocioEcologist, African Highlands Initiative, Box 26416, Kampala, Uganda. Email:

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Keywords:

participatory action research; institutional development; community based planning; Uganda; sector advisory services; local government planning

About this paper:

This paper discusses preliminary outcomes from building farmers' competencies and the use of participatory action research. It draws on the Ugandan NAADS program and uses action-learning to 'organize the demand side' of development.

Read the full paper



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Gwanda Community-based Natural Resources Management and Sustainable Livelihoods

Context (When, Where, Country, Region)	Ward 17 of Gwanda, Matebeleland South Province, Zimbabwe 1999 – 2005
Author (s) & Publisher	Project Review Team
Description	This region is characterised by long dry spells and erratic rainfall which has led to food insecurity and undue pressure on natural resources. Relief in the form of food and seed aid has created an unsustainable level of dependency, as communities have not been actively engaged in meeting their livelihood needs sustainably. In order to address this, the Gwanda Livelihoods Project used participatory planning and development processes to ensure that farmers develop self-sustaining initiatives were undertaken.
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community quarterly reflection meetings • Field days and reviews • Transformational Leadership Training • Leadership meetings (self-organised) to facilitate exchange of ideas and community's potential to analyse and prioritise their own development. • Self monitoring mechanisms
Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in community participation in natural resource management, within Ward 17 of Gwanda between 2001 and 2003 • A shift in mindset of the communities involved placing more emphasis on self-organisation, shared visioning, local initiatives and developing collective voices to influence service provision and policy • Local leaders were able to initiate, articulate demands and strengthen demand structures for better service provision. • Improved linkages between farmers and service providers (see project document for details) • Improved agricultural production through low input farmer centred innovations
Facilitating agent(s)	Practical Action Zimbabwe
Contact information	Absolom Masendeke Email: absolomm@practicalaction.org.zw
Website	http://practicalaction.org/?id=region_southern_africa

Keywords:

Zimbabwe; Matebeleland; transformational leadership; reflective learning; natural resource management; farmer innovation; low input farming; community based planning

Participatory Action Research in a rural community in Kenya

Context	This paper draws on experiences of community-based research to investigate the information and technology needs and sources for poor livestock keepers in the Lake Victoria Basin in East Africa. This was carried out in response to a need for developing community partnerships in which public and private sectors and the civil society could discover mutual interest in working with rural communities to create socially useful knowledge and technologies.
Author (s) & publisher	David M. Amudavi Nelso Mango, ICRAF – Nairobi
Description	This approach to community based research focuses on understanding the importance of adapting a ‘search conference’ as a tool in which communities are involved in identifying the problem, defining the research question, conducting the research, and using the results to create social change.
Methodology	The potential of participatory action research (PAR) was explored by engaging a systematically selected sample of 42 individuals in a Search Conference, which is a 21/2-day deliberative planning event. It stimulated various kinds of action, enhanced community participation and awareness, and increased community commitment to desired future. The participants developed cognitive consensus on six key issues: 1) social support services for social change, 2) credit accessibility, 3) agricultural support services, 4) enhancement of the natural resource management, 5) community partnerships with external support institutions, and 6) improvement of market access and infrastructure. The case study provides insights to the value of using a PAR tool to enhance community-based research into rural issues.
Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrated how participants from a rural community articulated issues that integrated economic and social development, and environmental protection. • created circumstances in which communicative action can be encouraged, sustained and be generated for personal, social and cultural development within a community’s social setting.
Facilitating agent(s)	CGIAR World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) – Nairobi
Contact information	David M Amudavi - Email: da54@cornell.edu Nelson Mango – N. Mango@cgiar.org
Website	www.worldagroforestrycentre.org

Keywords:

participatory action research; community based planning; community based research; Kenya, Lake Victoria; community partnerships; participatory action research; action learning

Participatory Management in Ottotomo Forest Reserve of Cameroon

Context	The need for greater community participation in natural resource management is increasingly recognized in Cameroon. This became apparent in 1994 when the new forestry law laid emphasis on it. Natural resource management decisions are made through complex interactions between actors and the natural resources base at various levels, from the farm, household and to national institutions and beyond. These actors are conscious of the fact that they are operating within a complex system and that they can learn, can adapt, and can modify the rules of their participation. Collaborative-based strategies and mechanisms are needed to accommodate these multiple interests. An essential aspect of the study was to assist forest administration staff and local NGOs to learn how to use PAR as “routine” approach to their normal activities. On the other hand, ACM was concerned with evaluating the utility of participatory action research as a methodology applicable to the context. ACM role was seen as being to facilitate a reflective learning process that would increase stockholder's confidence and commitment. Ottotomo Forest Reserve, Cameroon
Author (s) & Publisher	Cyprian Jum, Martin Abega, Francois Bengono
Description	The Ottotomo Forest Reserve is situated in the central province of Cameroon's forest zone. It is a forest management unit and a state forest reserve harbouring important plant and animal species and useful forest products for the local population. Ensuing conflicts between local communities and the reserve management resulted in a need for the reserve's management to seek support to identify a set of approaches, strategies and institutional arrangements that would enhance stakeholder's interaction.
Methodology	<p>The methodology was based on PAR using the following tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contacts and meetings at the meso- and micro-level to maintain active dialogue with stakeholders • participatory mapping & historical transects • pebble distribution • future scenarios and future collaborative vision <p>The PAR was conducted in the framework of Adaptive Collaborative Management (ACM), which proposes a number of steps that unfold in the following sequence: visioning, formulation of management plans, collective action, collaborative monitoring, collaborative learning and amendment of action plans. This process is driven by insiders, as opposed to being externally driven.</p>
Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a greater interest in collective action initiated • channels of communication with the local communities maintained through regular workshops and field meetings • information flows enhanced through village communicators • local confidence in forest administration staff improved • positive shifts in community attitudes contributed to improved staff

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> confidence and morale women in the local village engaged with 'process' of development
Facilitating agent(s)	Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)
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Website	www.cifor.cgiar.org

Keywords:

Cameroon; participatory Action Research; reflective learning; adaptive co-management, community-based forest management; 'learning by doing'; natural resource management



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Uganda Forestry Advisory Project

Context	Historically the agricultural extension system in Uganda neglected forestry extension services. Reform processes in both agricultural advisory services and in the forestry sector provided an opportunity to integrate the forestry system into the restructured advisory services and boost possibilities for building community-based forestry. Technicians working in the department of forestry historically focused on the central forests and chased people away instead of working with them.
Country	Uganda 1999 - 2004
Author (s) & publisher	Khanya-aicdd
Description	In 1999, the Ugandan government started a process of major policy and institutional reforms in the provision of agricultural advisory services and in the forestry sector. In carrying out the forest reforms, the Ugandan government developed a National Forest Programme (NFP) and the Forest Sector Umbrella Programme (FSUP) was set up to realise the programme. It drew in communities (in selected areas), service providers, local government and national institutions.
Methodology	The first phase comprised a Forest Sector Review that included a review of different types of forestry initiatives that were being implemented at the time. From this review, stakeholders were identified to participate in pilots to test new models of extension services.
Achievements (impacts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While it is difficult to quantify precise amounts, there is some evidence of people earning direct income from nursery businesses, timber sales, fruit trees and honey • Environmental Alert worked with communities in Mabamba, on introducing alternative livelihoods and the community has since started retreating from the wetland. Members recorded a growth in the number of livestock (goats), and the communities are now compliant with forestry reserve provisions and have an approved wetland management plan • The favourable policy framework has assisted communities to defend their access to forests on at least one occasion. • The pilots assisted in building social assets in the form of support to community organisation (farmer groups). • The reform process raised the profile of forests as a resource that can be used by the poor. • To an extent, forestry has been mainstreamed into rural development and environment to a certain extent, however it's not yet fully reflected in public sector budget allocations or in new decentralised services • The process generated a new institutional structure for decentralised forest management. • Technical skills such as tree nursery management and planting

	skills have grown as a result of the intervention
Lessons learnt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systems need to be in place and fully resourced • A need for high-level political commitment to resource the roll-out of approved policies. • Individual influence and position is important in driving processes and sustaining them beyond the initial intervention. • Institutional ownership should be built as fast as possible. • A successful intervention overcomes, rather than ignores, resistance and conflict. • A permanent role for facilitators <p>Lessons learnt about action-learning processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change takes time • Inclusive change requires resources • Communication is vital • Identify and act on 'quick wins' • Flexibility in design improves chances of success. • The personal style of the facilitator is important
Facilitating agent(s)	Uganda National Agricultural Advisory Service (NAADS)
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Website	www.naads.org.ug http://www.khanya-aicdd.org

Keywords:

Local government reform; sector advisory services; Uganda; Local government planning; Local government implementation; NAADS; Reflective learning; Action-learning processes; civil-society government partnerships