

About this report

This brief summarises a research study report on Partnerships for Scaling Up Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR). Commissioned by World Vision Australia, this independent study was undertaken by Day Four Projects between September and November 2023. Analysis support from World Vision Australia was provided by Alice Muller, FMNR Scale-Up Senior Impact Evidence Advisor and Dr. Saba Mebrahtu Habte, Impact Evidence Building Manager.

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Front cover photo: Sammy practices FMNR on his one-acre farm in Kenya. He was trained in pruning techniques and other regeneration skills through the Regreening Africa project in Kenya, helping to drastically increase his harvest.







Partners and stakeholders from the Kenyan Restoration Platform are sharing FMNR knowledge and learnings.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Over the past two decades, World Vision Australia has promoted Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) as a technical practice to restore degraded land, build resilience and transform communities. This simple and low-cost climate solution has since spread to more than 29 countries around the world. To accelerate the spread of FMNR, World Vision is mobilising FMNR scaling partnerships in four catalyst countries: Ethiopia, Zambia, Kenya and Uganda.

This research brief summarises the main findings from an independent cross-case analysis covering the four catalyst countries, undertaken in 2023 by Day Four Projects. The study aimed to examine the effectiveness and health of these partnerships and their different scaling strategies, and how they are measuring success.

Key findings include:

Sharing a united vision inspires members

Partnerships are using their united and consistent voice to influence change. Having a clear vision and north star provides a common direction for members.

One size does not fit all

The approaches to networking are different in each country's context and need to be fit for purpose.

Knowledge building and raising FMNR awareness are key partnership functions

Knowledge mobilisation, exchange and learning are all features of these partnerships and integral to building capacity and scaling FMNR.

Strategic support is increasing

All partnerships are seeking to engage all levels of government and influence government policy in various ways.

Funding matters

Sustained engagement and deep partnerships need funding. Member-fee dependency is impeding participation, planning and implementation.

Structures and processes of collaboration impact outcomes

Collaborations whose purpose is to deliver for FMNR alone are more likely to have formalised FMNR evidence bases and monitoring and evaluation tools. Further training and tools for consistency in monitoring and evaluation will help grow the evidence base for FMNR scaling partnerships.

CONTEXT

Globally, nearly one quarter of productive land is degraded¹, leading to soil erosion, failed crops and a loss of soil fertility, livestock and biodiversity. Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) provides a simple and low-cost solution to the damaging effects of land degradation. Over the past 20 years, World Vision has strengthened its practice of FMNR to help restore the natural environment, build resilience and transform the lives of vulnerable communities who rely on the land for nutrition and income. FMNR has now spread to more than 29 countries through the collective efforts of individuals, communities and organisations around the world.

World Vision aims to build on this success and rapidly expand FMNR and its many benefits across four 'catalyst countries': Ethiopia, Zambia, Kenya and Uganda. Each of these countries has:

- Extensive areas of degraded and arid land
- · High levels of multi-dimensional poverty
- National governments with a demonstrated commitment to landscape restoration
- World Vision offices with the experience and capacity to build national movements

In each catalyst country, the World Vision National Office is developing a distinct and contextualised national pathway for scaling FMNR. All four strategies rely heavily on effective collaborative approaches to program success, such as through developing partnerships, alliances, coalitions and networks for scaling FMNR.



Restoring land through the practice of FMNR helps reduce soil erosion and improve soil fertility and productivity. It provides vulnerable families with food, firewood and greater resilience to climate change.

World Vision commissioned an independent research study in 2023 to explore the effectiveness of these partnership-based strategies and help the processes by which future FMNR scaling partnerships can be supported, monitored and evaluated. The research results are summarised in this brief.

BOX 1 WHAT IS FMNR?

Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) is a highly effective, simple and low-cost technique that helps reverse land degradation and support local ecosystems to flourish.² Through FMNR, living tree stumps and self-sown seeds are re-grown into usable trees through pruning and protection. The regeneration of trees, which is generally faster and less expensive than planting trees, restores and builds natural assets and makes agricultural activities more productive. In turn, communities' income and quality of life are improved through increased food and water availability.

FMNR also increases the capture and storage of carbon in trees, plants and soil. This has a direct impact on climate change by removing this greenhouse gas from the atmosphere. The technical practice of FMNR can be used as part of a broader community development approach, such as the Regreening Communities (RGC) project model³, to mobilise and empower local communities to restore their natural environment.

¹ https://www.wfp.org/sustainable-livelihoods-and-ecosystems

² Francis R, Weston P, Birch J. The social, environmental and economic benefits of Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration. World Vision Australia. (2015)

Muller A, Lindell C, de Villier I, Garrett J, Ondere L, Zoueini R, et al. Regreening Communities Handbook. World Vision International. (nd)

HOW FMNR WORKS



FIND

Identify indigenous shrubs with extensive root systems.



PRUNE

Selective prune everything but the best few shoots. This funnels all the nutrients into one spot.



PROTECT

Ensure your shoots are protected from livestock and wildlife as they grow.



GROW

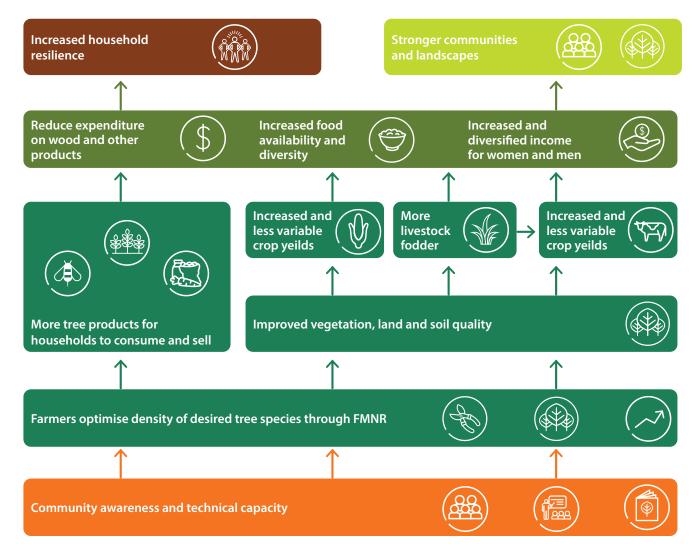
Continue to monitor and prune your tree as it grows.



UTILISE

Harvest edible fruits and leaves and use pruned stems and branches for animal fodder, building poles and firewood.

Figure 1: FMNR Theory of Change



RESEARCH OVERVIEW

The research study was undertaken by an independent evaluation partner, Day Four Projects, between September and November 2023. It drew from numerous perspectives and sources to understand how partnership approaches could be used to support FMNR scaling efforts. A multiple case study approach was selected for this work. One partnerships case study from each catalyst country was selected for review (detailed in Table 1):

- 1. FMNR Network in Uganda
- 2. Regreen the Globe National FMNR Scaling Platforms in Ethiopia
- 3. Kenyan Restoration Platform
- 4. Climate Change Network of Zambia

For each partnership, a literature review and interactive workshops with members were undertaken to identify insights into their structures, processes, contexts, outcomes and impacts, factors enabling and constraining progress, and monitoring and evaluation systems. Using multiple case studies allows for analysis both within and across different examples, helping to generate insights that are sensitive to local contexts as well as macro-level patterns. The results will inform how future FMNR partnerships are supported, monitored and evaluated to enhance their effectiveness and value for communities and the environment.

Research questions were organised into three areas of inquiry:

- 1. Review of existing partnerships for FMNR scaling
 - Example: What are the key characteristics, components and factors related to their structure, purpose or function?
- 2. Outcomes and impacts of existing partnerships for FMNR scaling
 - Example: What contributions have the partnerships made to scaling FMNR?
- 3. Monitoring and evaluation of partnerships

Example: What key performance indicators have been used to measure their effectiveness? What other indicators could have been used?

BOX 2 WHAT IS A CASE STUDY?

A case is a **single unit of study** such as a person, organisation, country, policy or – as in this study – a partnership. Cases may be selected because they are representative of a broader set of experiences or because they are unique in some way. Case studies have long been used to explain, describe or explore events or phenomena in the everyday contexts in which they occur.⁴ Because activities are examined in context, using case studies is considered to be a naturalistic rather than experimental approach. While single case studies allow for deep understanding of a single or individual experience, **multiple case studies** allow for insights to be compared and contrasted across cases, and therefore for ideas and theories to be tested. A multiple case study approach may involve both quantitative and qualitative data, and they are powerful tools for helping build rich pictures of what has taken place, why and how.⁵

⁴ Yin RK. Case study research, design and method. 4. Sage Publications Ltd. (2009)

⁵ Crowe S, Cresswell K, Robertson A, Huby G, Avery A, Sheikh A. *The case study approach*. BMC Med Res Methodol. 2011 Jun 27;11:100. doi: 10.1186/1471-2288-11-100. PMID: 21707982; PMCID: PMC3141799.

TABLE 1: Overview of the four partnerships included in the study

CASE STUDY	COUNTRY	ORIGIN OF PARTNERSHIP AND FUNDING SOURCE	DESCRIPTION
FMNR Network	Uganda	 Established in 2014 via the FMNR In East Africa project. Formed by World Vision Uganda and supported by the ANCP and eight other pioneer organisations.⁶ 	The FMNR Network is a coalition of multi-stakeholder organisations aimed at scaling up FMNR to improve food, nutrition and income security in Uganda. The network has features of a combine and integrate partnership, meaning that it brings together organisations with a common goal to combine resources, knowledge and skills.
ReGreen the Globe National FMNR Scaling Platforms	Ethiopia	 Established under the ReGreen the Globe Pilot Project in Ethiopia (2019–2024). ReGreen the Globe is supported by the Australian Government through the ANCP and implemented and co-led by World Vision and the Ethiopian national government. 	There are two national FMNR scaling platforms in Ethiopia: the National Alliance and the Centre of Expertise. These multi-stakeholder platforms are closely connected and aim to amplify, align and coordinate national FMNR scaling efforts in line with a shared strategy and action plan. Their goal is to contribute to Ethiopia's national objective to restore 15 million hectares of land by the end of 2030. These two platforms are best understood as combine and integrate partnerships.
Kenyan Restoration Platform	Kenya	 Established in 2017 through the Reversing Land Degradation in Africa by Scaling-Up Evergreen Agriculture (Regreening Africa) project. Kenyan Restoration Platform is jointly funded by ten government, research, national and international development organisations.⁸ 	The Kenyan Restoration Platform brings together government, research partners and a consortium of international, national and non-government members into a national multi-stakeholder network. This includes World Vision as an implementing partner. The platform's mission is to increase tree cover and address land degradation in Kenya. FMNR is one of several land restoration strategies that members are working to implement under the Forest and Landscape Restoration Action Plan (2021–2025). It is best understood as a leverage and exchange partnership where members recognise that other members can provide the resources they need to realise their strategic goals.
Zambian Climate Change Network	Zambia	 Established in 2008 at the Zambia Community-Based Natural Resource Management Forum. Formalised in 2011 as a non- partisan, voluntary network with legal status; members pay an affiliation fee, and the network is governed by a Board that is elected tri-annually and has paid coordination staff. 	The Zambian Climate Change network has a mix of 55 individual and organisational members from institutions, media, nongovernment organisations, research organisations and other alliances. The ZCCN is an example of a combine and integrate partnership.

LIMITATIONS

The main limitations that emerged throughout the evaluation included:

- Changes in staff among member organisations, which contributes to partnerships being at different stages of development.
- Consistency and depth of available documentation varied across case studies. Partnerships range in degrees of formality and have different approaches to collecting and documenting information.
- Despite strong efforts to have complete representation of all partner perspectives in data gathering activities, it was not always possible. This is common in partnership reviews and evaluations and reflects partners' differing learning and evaluation priorities. Importantly, the opportunity to engage was made visible to all and the results are being shared with all partners in ways that can prompt future interest in participation in review processes.

The Hunger Project Uganda, Uganda National Federation of Farmers, Africa 2000 Network, Kibaale District Local Government, Bugi-ZARDI, Vi Agroforestry, Kibaale District Civil Society Organization Network, and World Agroforestry Center (ICRAF)

⁷ FMNR Network Annual Workplan: 2022 Annual Budget for the FMNR Network - Uganda

The Centre of International Forestry Research (CIFOR), International Council for Research on Agroforestry (ICRAF), European Union (EU), Kenyan Government Departments, Kenya Forestry Research Institute, Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), World Resources Institute, World Vision, Global Evergreening Alliance (GEA), Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) Nairobi.

FINDINGS

REVIEW OF EXISTING PARTNERSHIPS FOR FMNR SCALING

Knowledge exchange and networking are prominent

All partnerships studied have knowledge mobilisation, exchange and learning as key functions in their collaborative efforts, incorporated in at least two ways:

- Training and capacity strengthening on FMNR:
 Partnerships are using the structures and processes of the
 partnerships to disseminate FMNR information.
- Practice sharing: The informal sharing of knowledge between partnership members on what is working, where, why and for who has been important for scaling up FMNR in each context.

Collaboration efforts within each partnership differ in frequency and formality. The types of resources exchanged differ, as do the collaboration benefits for members. **All partnerships are creating opportunities for networking** and exchanging information about FMNR, including tools and tactics for increasing awareness and uptake of the practice.

Three of the four partnerships are best described as **leverage** and exchange partnerships. These partnerships form when one organisation recognises that another can provide the resources (funding, knowledge, services, skills or equipment) needed to achieve its own goals. The FMNR Network in Uganda was instead understood to use a **combine and integrate** partnership approach where the focus is less about the value for individual members and more centred on what can be achieved together.

"The establishment of different working groups [within the platform] by World Vision creates an enabling environment to work together."

- Partnership member, Ethiopia

Funding is a factor for sustained engagement

Each partnership has different funding arrangements, including membership fees and government support. Some rely on voluntary commitments and the time and energy of deeply invested members. In other partnerships where members are paying ongoing fees, the nature of the transaction has implications for their expectations as a member and the value they are seeking from their participation. The review found that sustained engagement and deep partnerships need funding, and member-fee dependency is impeding scaling efforts.

"When you don't have people to maintain the action groups, they weren't resourced. In-person meetings were more expensive. People get paid to come to things because people don't have the resources."

- Kenyan Restoration Platform partner



Stakeholder consultation workshops in Ethiopia's Boset District are supporting the formation of a regional FMNR scaling working group.

Critical success factors for partnerships for scaling FMNR

Critical success factors are those features of partnerships that are known to be associated with effective and efficient partnering. The Partnership Brokers Association⁹ divides critical success factors into four categories:

1. Effectiveness: In each partnership, the importance of having a clear vision and north star for common direction and inspiring members is very clear. Some detail their shared vision in formal documents and agreements. Others have taken time to meet and develop common understanding of that vision.

different in structure, process and intended outcomes. Some collaborations exist to deliver specifically upon FMNR goals, while others exist to deliver FMNR as part of overarching land restoration or climate goals. In all, **a focus on leadership is critical.** In member-based networks, distributed leadership may be more appropriate than a Steering Committee or Board. Each partnership has documented **governance** arrangements, though more clarity is needed to understand how these structures interact with leadership.

2. Approach: Each partnership is slightly

3. Attitudes and competencies: All case studies echo the sentiment that working collaboratively requires members' and participants' time. In less formalised networks

that focus mostly on knowledge exchange, the transactional costs are lower for members. In more formalised partnership approaches, these costs can be much higher as they meet more regularly and in more specific ways. **Time and resources** are major considerations for how these four partnerships develop.

4. Results: Different approaches to collaboration generate different outcomes. For example, partnerships that aim to teach as many farmers as possible how to practice FMNR use a conding collaborative approach like campaigning.

corresponding collaborative approach like campaigning, community outreach or knowledge sharing. Where the aim is to influence government to provide support for FMNR adoption, then advocacy or lobbying are key approaches.

IMPACTS AND OUTCOMES OF EXISTING PARTNERSHIPS FOR FMNR SCALING

Raising FMNR knowledge and awareness is key

All partnerships identified that building knowledge and awareness of FMNR among stakeholders is critical to realising their vision, and they are each successfully doing so. However, outcomes from their communication efforts have differed.

Partnerships that exclusively focus on FMNR are concentrating communication and messaging strategies on an FMNR-based narrative. In Uganda, for example, FMNR is widely recognised and the FMNR Network in Uganda included member organisations with significant FMNR technical expertise. Partnerships that work more broadly across the climate sector have found that FMNR has an 'image issue' in comparison to other land restoration solutions and needs additional messaging support in its promotion.

"There's a reason why everyone loves to do a tree planting campaign. FMNR doesn't look charismatic...it just looks like regrowing scrubland. There are visual aspects that are harder to buy into."

- Kenyan Restoration Platform partner

Partnerships offer members increased resources, reputational and learning value

Both Ethiopia's ReGreen the Globe scaling platforms and the FMNR Network in Uganda highlight the value gained from being in a collaborative relationship with World Vision and other partners. All partnerships sense increasing associational value benefits from being in collaboration with one another. This is seen especially in advocacy efforts between local and national government departments and representatives as being in collaboration increases the reputational legitimacy and strength of partners.

All four partnerships note the increase in learning value through knowledge exchange and spaces for sharing. Longevity, consistency and depth of learning value vary across collaborations, and those with more structure and funding can amplify and embed learning value for partners over the longer term.

All four partnership approaches include a focus on advocating for others to adopt FMNR. All seek to influence government policy in various ways.

⁹ The Partnership Brokers Association is an international professional body for those managing and developing collaboration practices. It sets a global standard for partnership brokering good practice through providing clear principles for multi-stakeholder collaboration.

"Being hosted by the government and convening something in support of the government is positive in terms of how you're perceived. Connections with government institutions moved beyond just finding ways of doing things together. We created connection."

Kenyan Restoration Platform partner

FMNR demonstration sites connect and equip partners

FMNR demonstration sites are highlighted as integral to building FMNR technical capacity. They play a connecting role between stakeholders and FMNR practice, giving stakeholders access to a physical, real-time evidence base to see and try FMNR for themselves. Demonstration sites are a unique feature to both the Centre of Expertise and the FMNR Network in Uganda.

"For me, FMNR is very successful where it has been implemented. But for scaling up, people may need to see those successful demonstration and learning sites...[it] is needed to mobilise those farmers and practitioners in order to visit practically and implement the scaling up in their areas."

Partnership member, Ethiopia

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships' monitoring and evaluation processes are varied

There are two potential focus areas for monitoring and evaluation of FMNR scaling partnerships: firstly, **progress** in scaling FMNR and secondly, the health of the partnerships. Evaluating partnership health provides a critical opportunity for partners to reflect on and strengthen their experiences and the quality and value of their relationships. While the evidence base globally for FMNR is growing, evidence on the utility and health of scaling partnerships is less advanced and therefore a key focus of this review.

Among these case studies, the only collaborations that are systematically monitoring and evaluating their partnerships are the ReGreen the Globe national FMNR scaling platforms in Ethiopia. These two platforms (National Alliance and the Centre of Expertise) use a participatory partnership health check tool developed by World Vision and based on 10 features of a successful partnership. An annual FMNR scaling partner survey¹⁰ with all scaling partners and regular joint reviews and validation sessions against annual action plans were used to evaluate partner impact. Other partnerships are without formal partnership monitoring and evaluation processes.

Developing consistent indicators for measuring partnership health is needed

Despite differences in the formality and resourcing of their monitoring and evaluation approaches, there were a range of potential indicators for partnership health available across the four case studies. Standardising indicators where possible would help to better understand partnership health and effectiveness across contexts. These indicators could include:

- Number, distribution and scope of member organisations
- Effective partnership coordination
- Attendance at annual general meetings and regular meetings
- · Regular communication to partners and stakeholders
- Range of voices involved in the partnership
- Grassroots participation, with a high value attributed to members from local through to international¹¹
- Sense of mutual trust and transparency
- · New funding and donor engagement
- Evidence and technical support to deliver impact
- Rates of participation of women, people with disabilities or faith-based groups

Documenting the delivery of services or programs, unintended benefits, financial and non-financial resources, and greater social or political capital would help to measure individual partner outcomes and how partnerships are generating outcomes for their partners.

¹⁰ The Partnership Performance and Health Check is an annual FMNR scaling partner survey developed by World Vision Australia in December 2018.

¹¹ Partners overwhelmingly viewed securing inclusive community involvement and commitment in the partnership as integral to bringing about contextual and cultural legitimacy, networks and community champions required for mobilising and scaling FMNR.

CONCLUSION

Collaborative partnerships can play an important role in building a global movement for restoring land and fighting poverty through FMNR. By increasing our understanding of partnerships' strategies, effectiveness and health, this research will help to maximise the impact of existing and future partnerships for scaling FMNR.

In this review, all four partnerships demonstrated value for individual partners as well as shared value generated by the partnerships. While data was limited on partnership monitoring and evaluation practices, a number of key elements were found to be clearly present across all partnerships, as described by The Partnering Initiative¹² in their concept of collaborative advantage. These elements include:

- · Connection: Networking, connecting, building relationships
- **Complementarity:** Bringing together complementary and essential resources
- Standards: Creating collective legitimacy and knowledge
- Shared learning: Creating a mechanism for collective learning and capability building

- Scale: Combining delivery capacity across geographies
- Critical mass: Collectively providing sufficient weight of action

These partnership case studies demonstrate that while no single collaborative approach will work in every context, the critical factors of **shared ambition**, **knowledge exchange**, **mutual reciprocity and advocacy are all enhancing successful scaling efforts**.

In some cases (Uganda and Ethiopia), **FMNR is foregrounded** as the central purpose for the collaboration. Whereas in Zambia, **FMNR is one of several initiatives** being considered through the partnership. A collaboration does not solely have to be focused on FMNR, however this research has demonstrated that FMNR can be seen in competition to other regeneration practices. Looking to the future, it will be important to create opportunities within the partnership model to address the potential challenges of FMNR being presented among a suite of other regeneration practices.



Members of the National Alliance in Ethiopia are gathered to work towards their common goal of increasing FMNR awareness, scaling efforts and resource mobilisation.

¹² The Partnering Initiative (TPI). Maximising the impact of partnerships for the SDGs: A practical guide to partnership value creation. The Partnering Initiative and UN DESA. (2019)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Raise the profile of FMNR through supporting partnerships to:

- Collect and share stories about FMNR's value alongside other regeneration approaches.
- Advocate to include FMNR in existing restoration, regreening or revegetation programs, rather than creating new programs.

Support partnerships to build FMNR knowledge and skills through targeted, high-quality and consistent FMNR messaging:

- Provide partnership members with messaging and training on how to implement FMNR and train others.
- Develop materials in communities' local languages
- Develop visual references to support FMNR scaling efforts.

Utilise partnerships to conduct transnational advocacy:

 Support partnerships to advocate for deeper government investment in FMNR through engagement at local, national and transnational levels.

Convene, network and collaborate to facilitate meaningful FMNR knowledge exchange:

- Host symposiums and workshops for representatives to come together and share restoration practices.
- Convene international technical experts and speakers to share experiences.
- Allocate funding for the coordination and governance of partnerships to ensure sustained, member-led practices can develop

Provide training and support for monitoring, evaluation and learning:

- Use a standardised tool or approach for monitoring both FMNR efforts and partnership approaches.
- Provide support and training in stakeholder mapping
- Collect useful information to guide scaling efforts and grow the evidence base for FMNR scaling partnerships



Delegates attend a global conference on nature-based solutions in March 2024, at which the results of this research brief were shared to benefit other FMNR partnerships and stakeholders around the world.



This regional FMNR scaling working group in Ethiopia helps to link national scaling efforts with on-the-ground FMNR programming.

For more information, please contact:

Alice Muller, FMNR Scale-Up Senior Impact Evidence Advisor, World Vision Australia: alice.muller@worldvision.com.au

Saba Mebrahtu Habte, Impact Evidence Building Manager, World Vision Australia: saba.mebrahtuhabte@worldvision.com.au

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