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Branching out – building evidence for the Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) approach for land restoration

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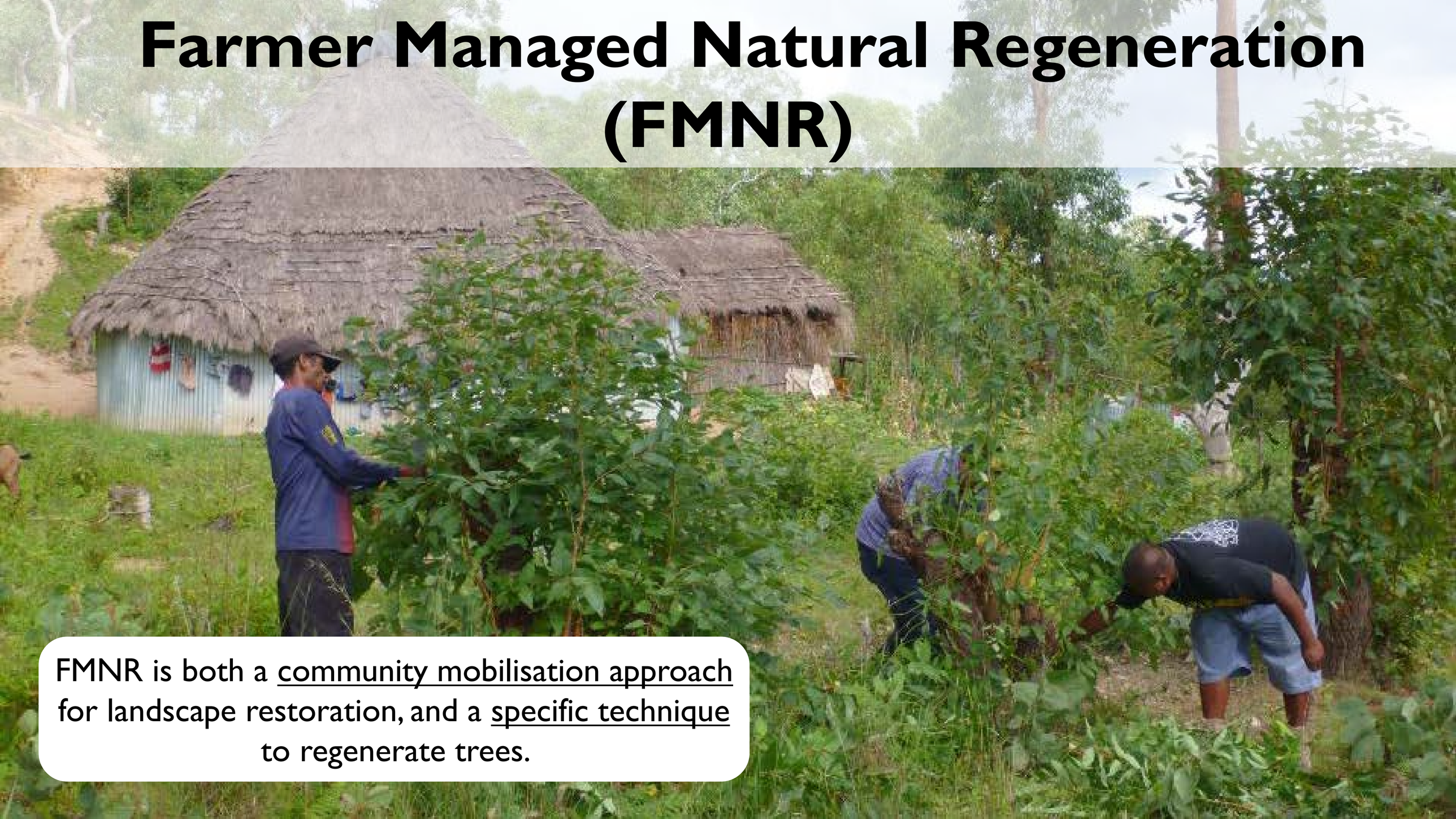
Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR)

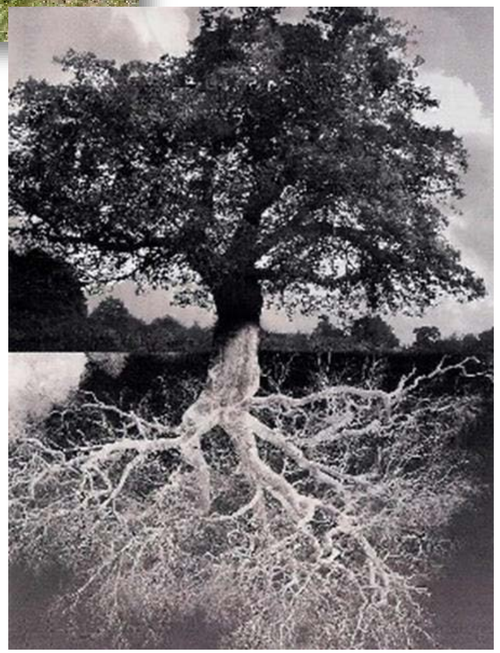


FMNR is both a community mobilisation approach for landscape restoration, and a specific technique to regenerate trees.

As a technique…

It involves **pruning and protecting tree and shrub regrowth** to allow them to **grow into trees**

This brings the benefits of increased trees in the landscape – timber, firewood, forest fruits, medicinal products, income…



Key elements of the FMNR project approach

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Awareness creation & training

Favourable policy environment & forest rights

Organisational structures

Advocacy – enhanced market access

Training – NRM & forest products

Follow-up & encouragement

Simplified FMNR program theory

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Farmers optimise density of desired tree species through FMNR

More tree products for households to consume and sell

Improved vegetation, land and soil quality

Increased and less variable crop yields

More livestock fodder

Increased livestock production

Reduced expenditure on wood and other forest products

Increased food availability and diversity

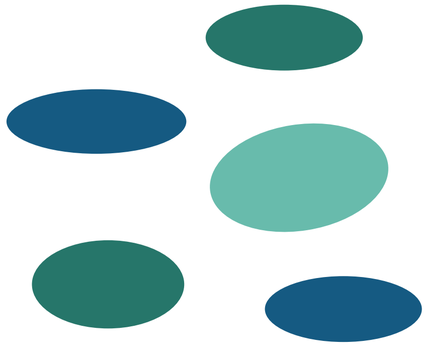
Increased and diversified income for women and men

Increased household resilience

Stronger communiites and landscapes

Contributing to the SDGs

Our evolving approach to building evidence



Project Evaluations

Evidence Gap Analysis (2016)

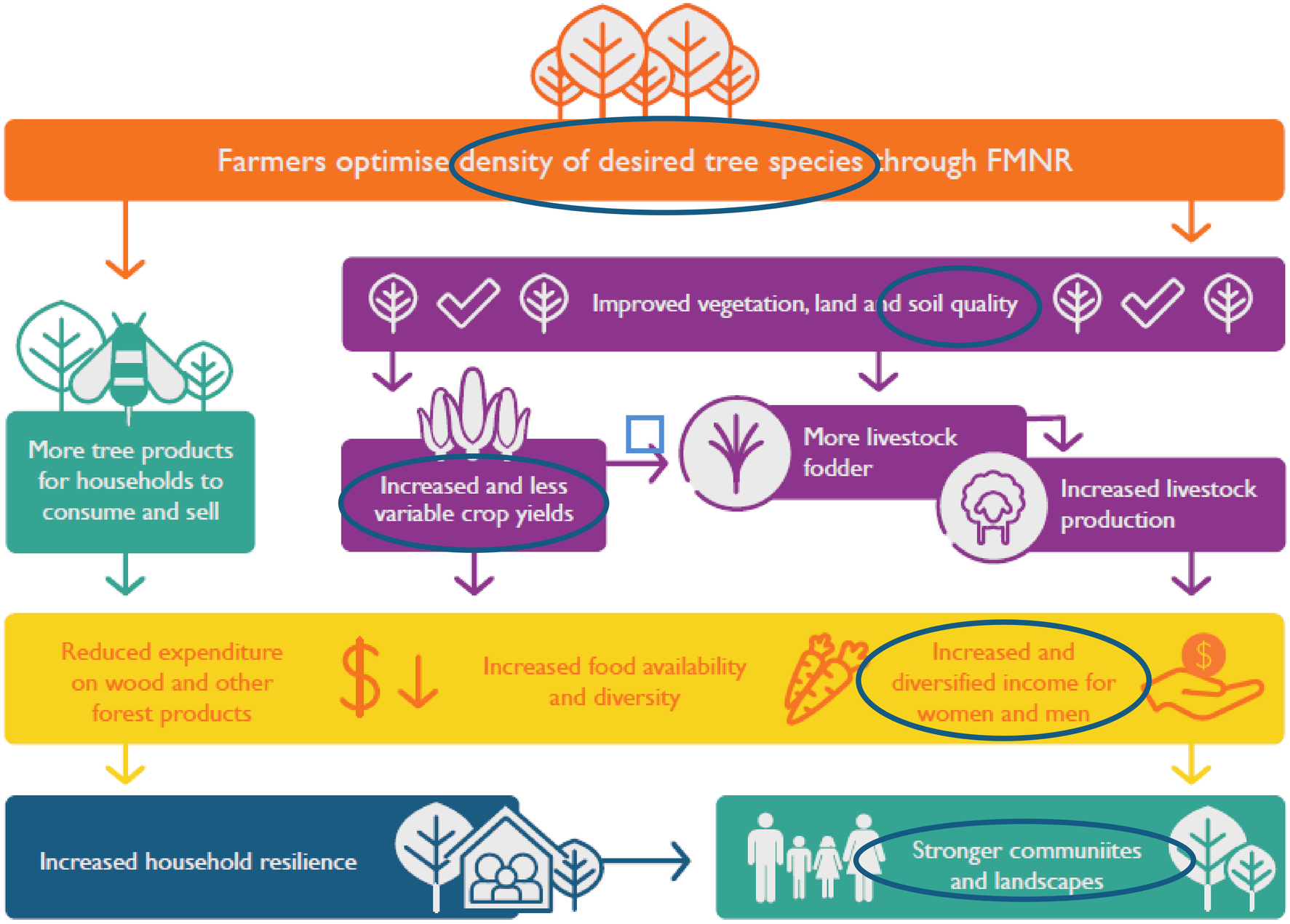
Resilience and livelihoods

Why did we do an Evidence Gap Analysis?

- Better understand what we know about the **outcomes** of our programs
- Identify the evidence gaps
- Meaningful contribution to the knowledge space
- Plan evaluations in a more intentional manner
- Program improvement

Disciplined, reflective – and a living document

Simplified FMNR program theory



Benefits of doing an evidence gap analysis

Approach

- Identified gaps in our project model, especially around gender and consistency of indicators
- Update evidence

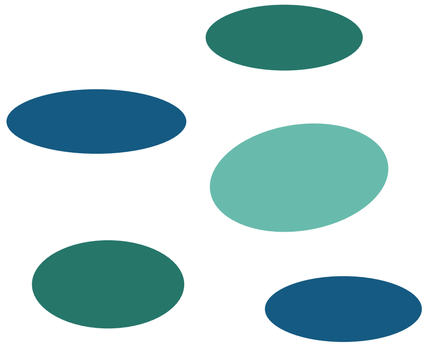
Programme Improvement

- Were able to make recommendations following the review of implementation
- Developed specific gender-related recommendations following new insights

Evaluation planning & prioritisation

- Identified regions/ contexts where evidence was scare – informed new designs
- Provided excellent summary underpinned by detail regarding our program approaches

Our evolving approach to building evidence



Project Evaluations

Evidence Gap Analysis (2016)

Meta-evaluation (2019)

Resilience and livelihoods

A **meta-analysis** was employed to examine these outcomes across projects

- *A statistical technique used to systematically combine and reconcile results for outcomes across multiple studies that may involve somewhat different study designs, sample sizes and present conflicting results.*

(Haidich 2010)

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Projects were selected based on the following criteria:

- Incorporated an FMNR approach as part of its activities
- Minimum duration of 3 years
- Concluded within the five years from 2014-2018
- Endline evaluation reports and raw data were available
- Presented a sufficiently rigorous evidence base

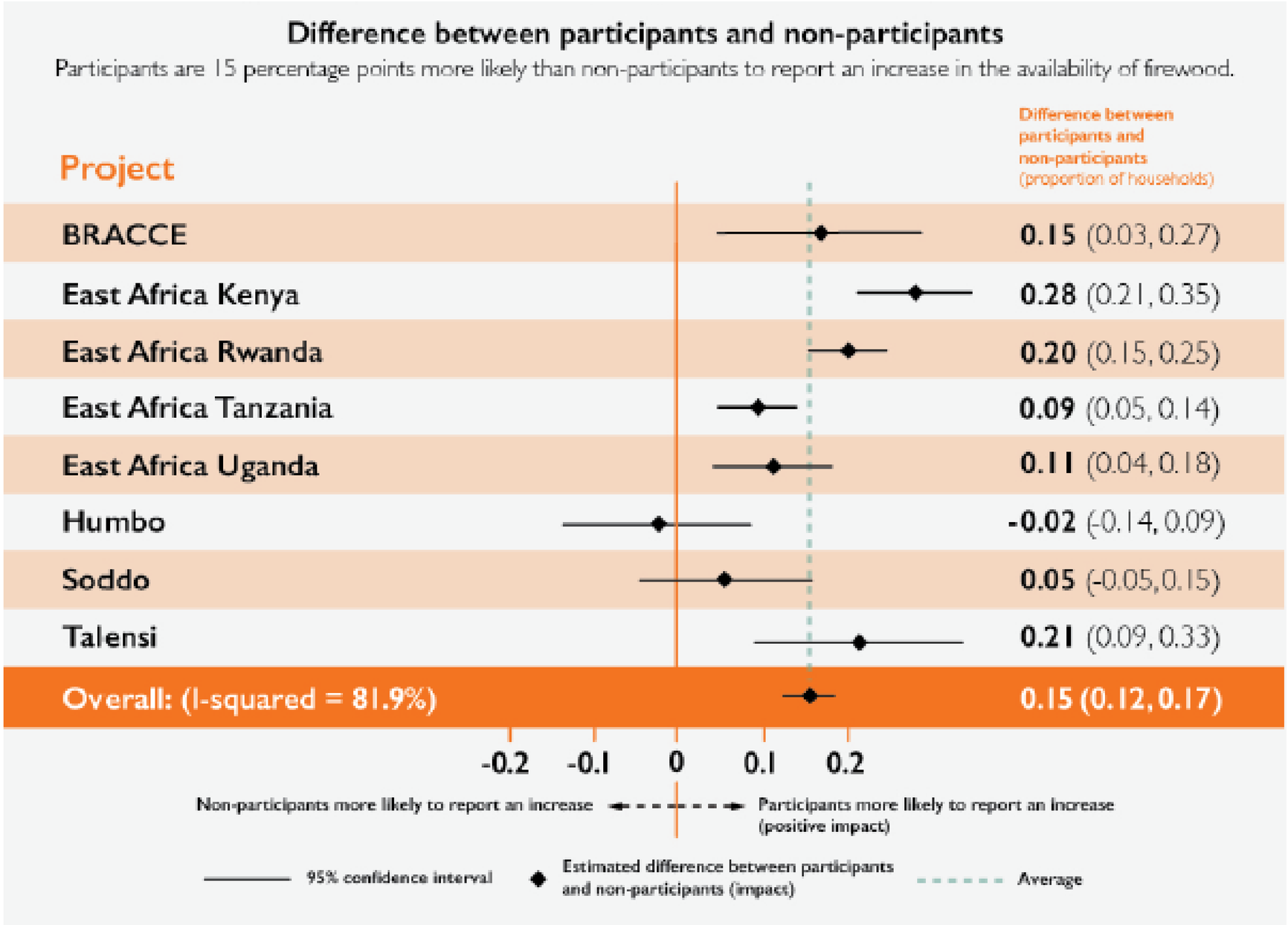
8 projects, total sample size of 5095 households

Summary of findings

Evidence suggests that recently completed World Vision-supported projects incorporating FMNR have:

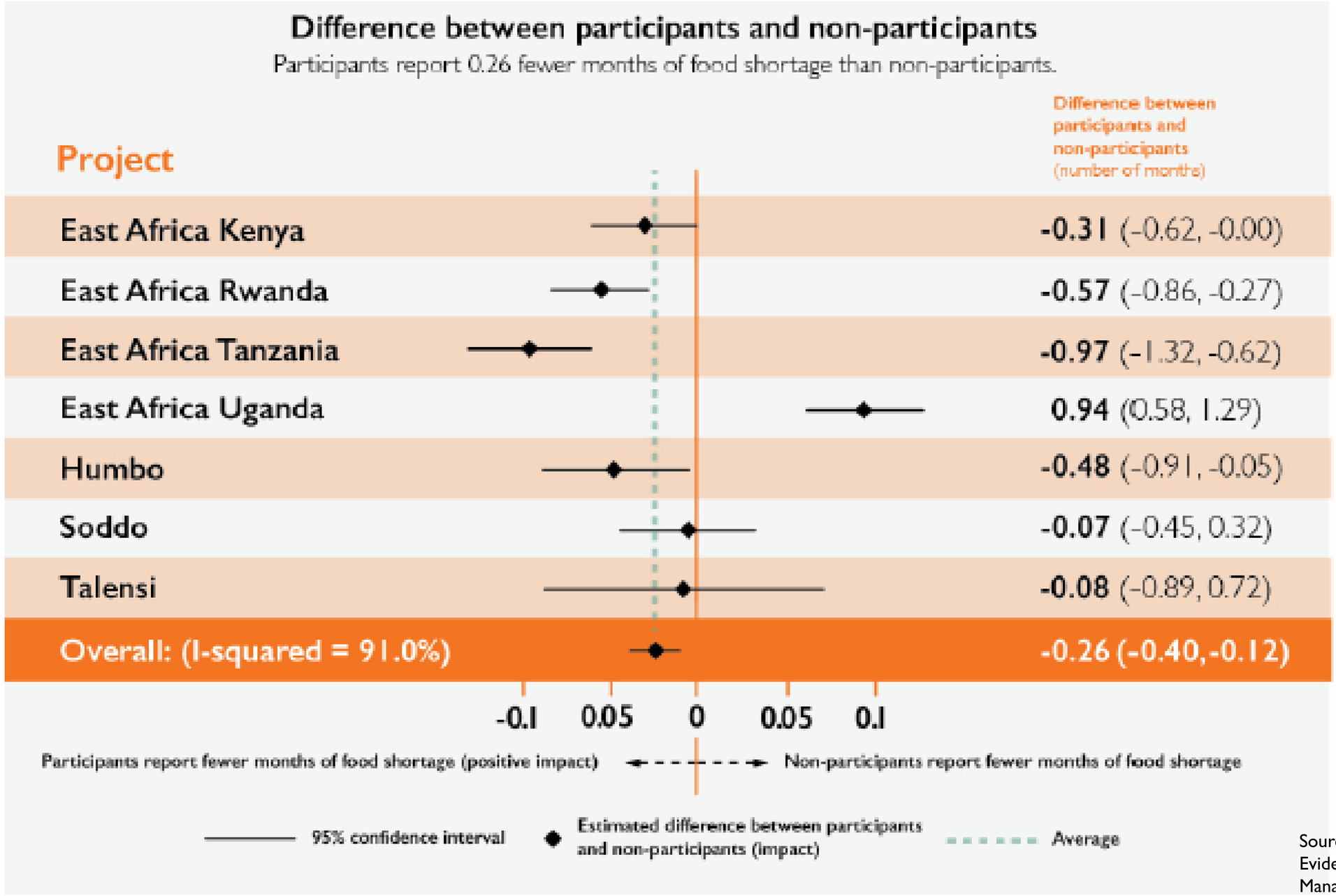
- **high reach and uptake**
- **improved tree cover and tree density**
- **increased availability of wood and forest products**
- **improved land and soil quality**
- **increased income and decreased poverty**
- **improved food security**
- **improved child wellbeing**
- **improved gender equality and social cohesion**

Households reporting an increase in the availability of firewood



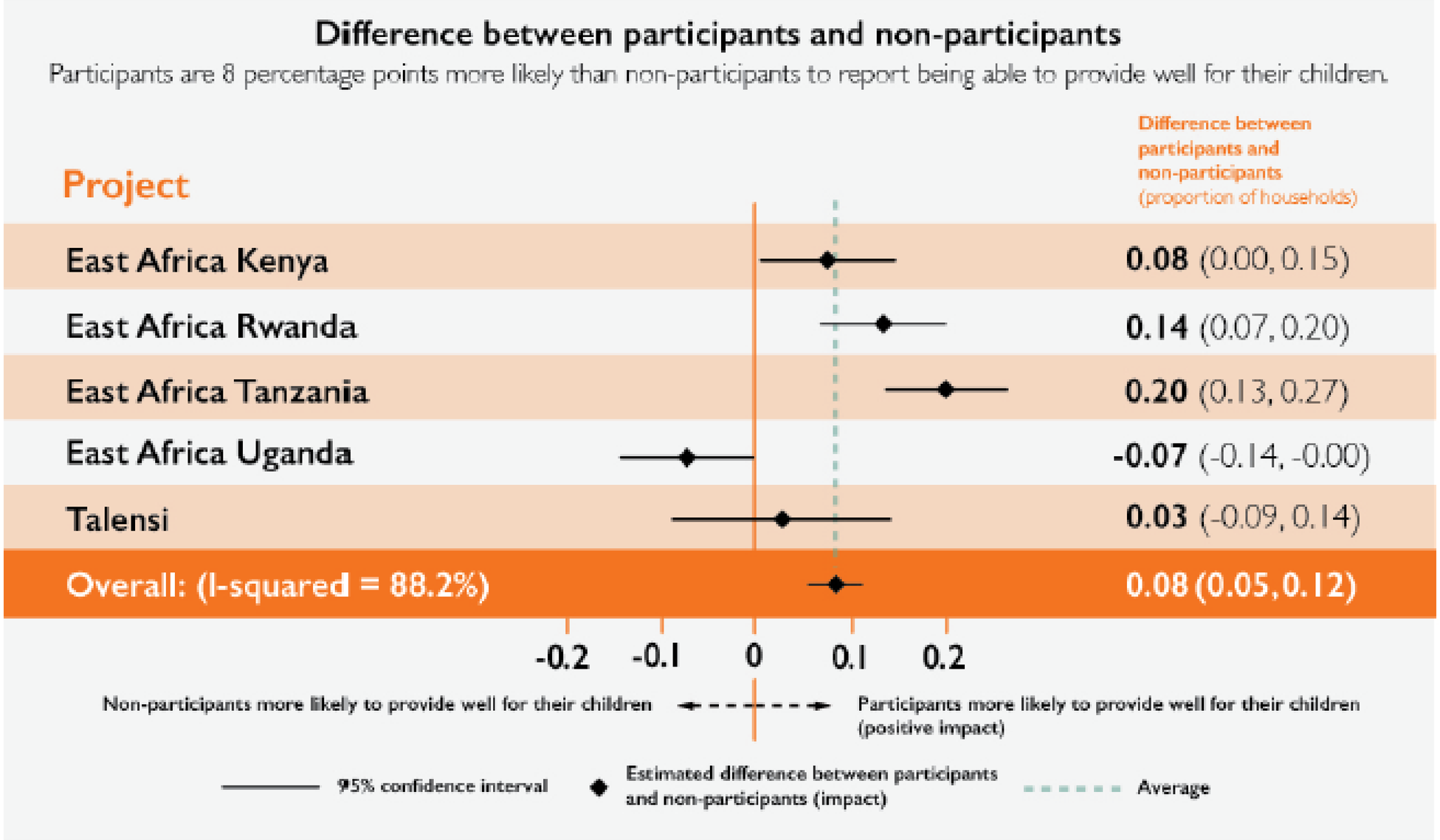
Source: World Vision (2019) Evidence of Impact. Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration.

Average # months of food shortage



Source: World Vision (2019) Evidence of Impact. Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration.

% of households that can provide well for their children



Source: World Vision (2019) Evidence of Impact. Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration.

FMNR in Talensi, Ghana

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- 96% of farmers practiced FMNR
- 81% reported an increase in trees in the community (BL 59%, p<0.000)
- 94% farmers using improved soil management practices
- Reduction in HHs reporting one or more hungry months (BL 87 % to EL 63%, p<0.000)
- 95% of HHs with multiple income sources, increasing resilience (57% → 95%, p<0.000)

(Source: World Vision Australia (2019) Evidence Brief, Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration project, Talensi Ghana)

"As for *tintung lebge tii* (FMNR), I don't know where to start. It has helped us in many ways! Our goats go there to graze, our women get firewood, our children get fruits and we also harvest honey from the FMNR site."

– Participant, lead farmers focus group, Yameriga village.

FMNR in Talensi, Ghana

2010

2015

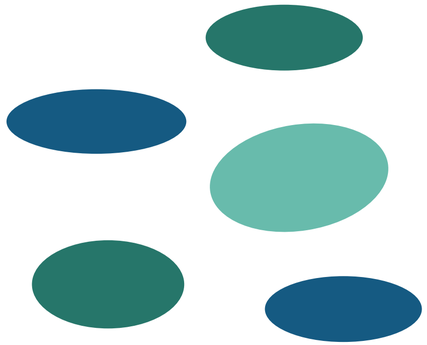
Summary of findings

Evidence suggests that recently completed World Vision-supported projects incorporating FMNR have:

- **high reach and uptake**, but less so for female-headed households
- **improved tree cover and tree density**
- **increased availability of wood and forest products**
- **improved land and soil quality**
- **increased income and decreased poverty**
- **improved food security,** but not necessarily for poorer households
- **improved child wellbeing**, and more so for poorer households
- **improved gender equality and social cohesion**

The next steps…

Our evolving approach to building evidence



Project Evaluations

Evidence Gap Analysis (2016)

Meta-evaluation (2019)

Impact-led (2020)

Resilience and livelihoods

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Twin-track approach to building a credible account of change

- Deep dive evidence building for key project approaches
- Improved decision making going forward
- Standardised indicators across breadth to allow for aggregation of data for reach and uptake
- Standing up the multidisciplinary ‘Impact Hub’
- Systems development to capture impact across the WV footprint

More deeply engage a broader audience

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Thank you

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