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## INTRODUCTION

Vulnerability to hunger in SSA has been associated with poverty and dis-empowerment (Global Hunger Index, 2009). This brings sharp focus to formulation and implementation of policies. A more equitable approach to development (Vision 2030, ASDS, FNSP) means focusing on enterprises and environments that are relevant to the needs of the poor and vulnerable in society and which exploit the opportunities available in their environment. This entails, inter alia, pursuance of the ideals of good governance. We assess citizen awareness, participation, representation and influence in de-centralized governance structures within the Agri-food system.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Governance:** decision making process with regard to: defining expectations, the granting of power and the verification of performance. Also refers to the process through which decisions are implemented i.e. structures with authority to allocate resources, coordinate and control actions in a system.

A 'perception-based' approach in which subjective measures of governance were taken from case studies of farmers participating in the National Agricultural and Livestock Extension Program (NALEP). Stakeholder workshops were held for validation and for charting the way forward.



Mbeere, a low potential dry zone with acute food and livelihood crisis

Kirinyaga, lower and drier parts have inadequate/erratic rains, over-reliance on maize for food.

### Table 1: Dimensions of governance selected

- Awareness and perceptions on project management and local decision making organs
- Satisfaction with project interventions & benefits;
- Participation of farmers, civil society in activities and decision making processes;
- Extent and quality of participation of farmers and civil society in local organs
- Empowerment – farmer representation and influence

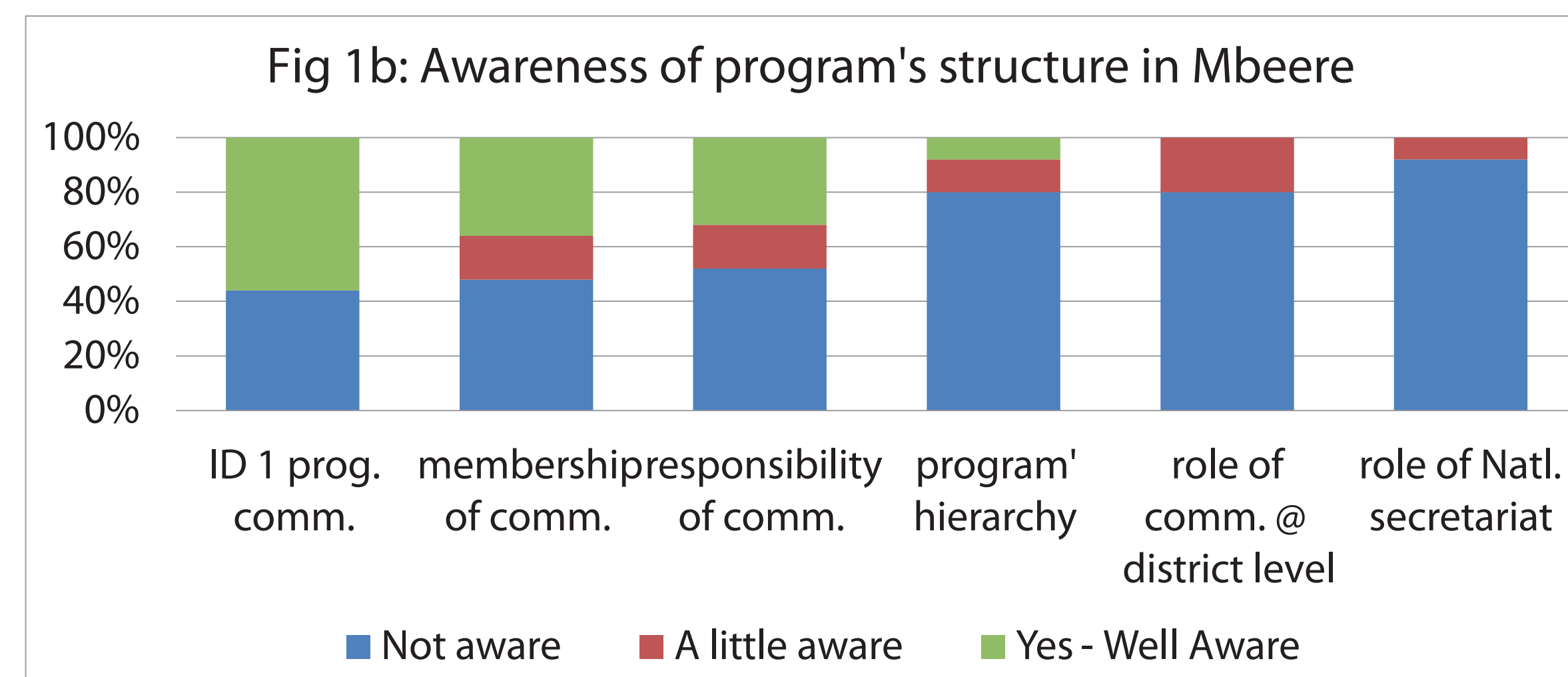
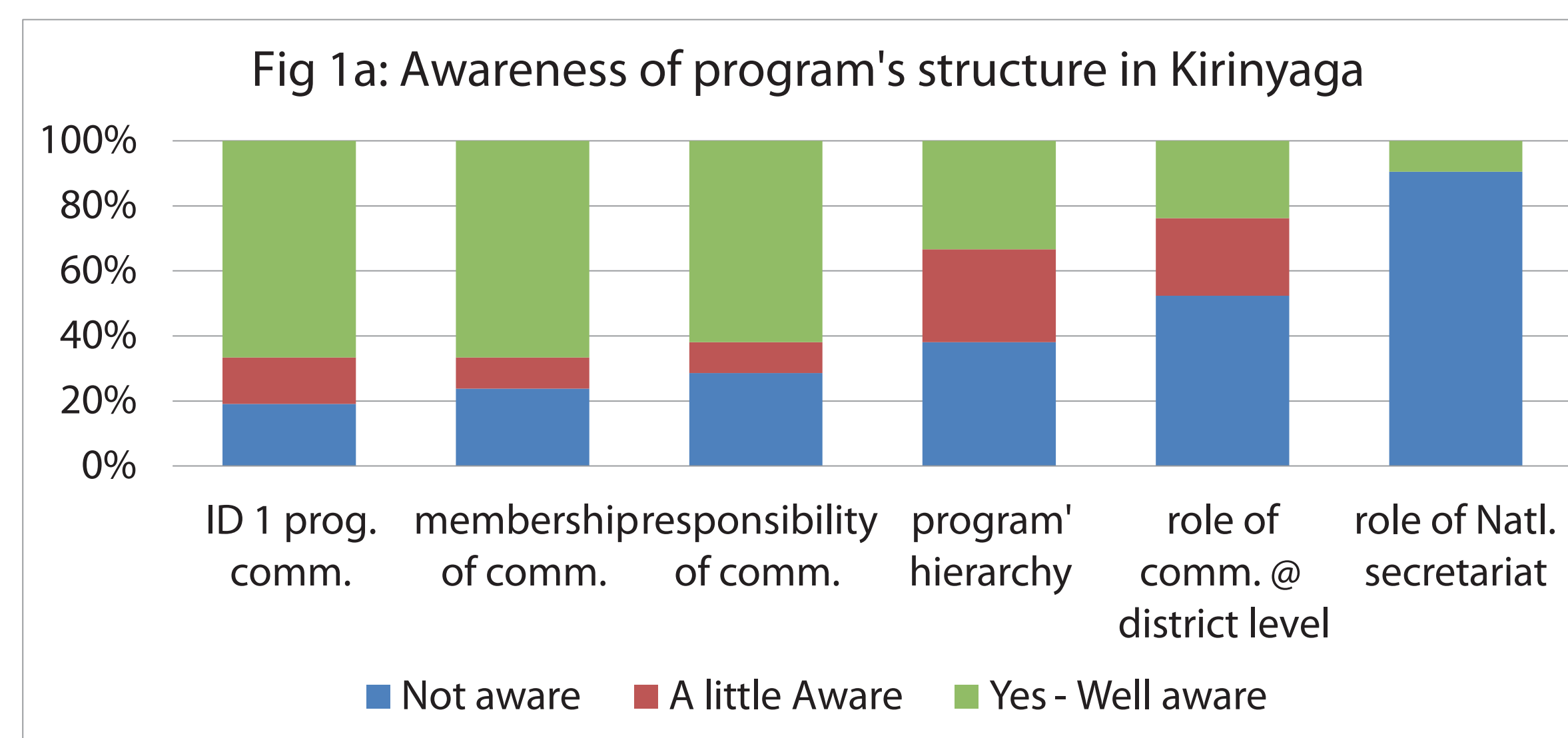
### Also whether farmers are aware of:

- The guiding principles of the project i.e. entry, exit, dispute resolution
- The role of various committees in project and local level & decisions that their committees can authorize (power)
- Vertical linkages of committee i.e. where some decisions are differed to

## RESULTS

### Awareness

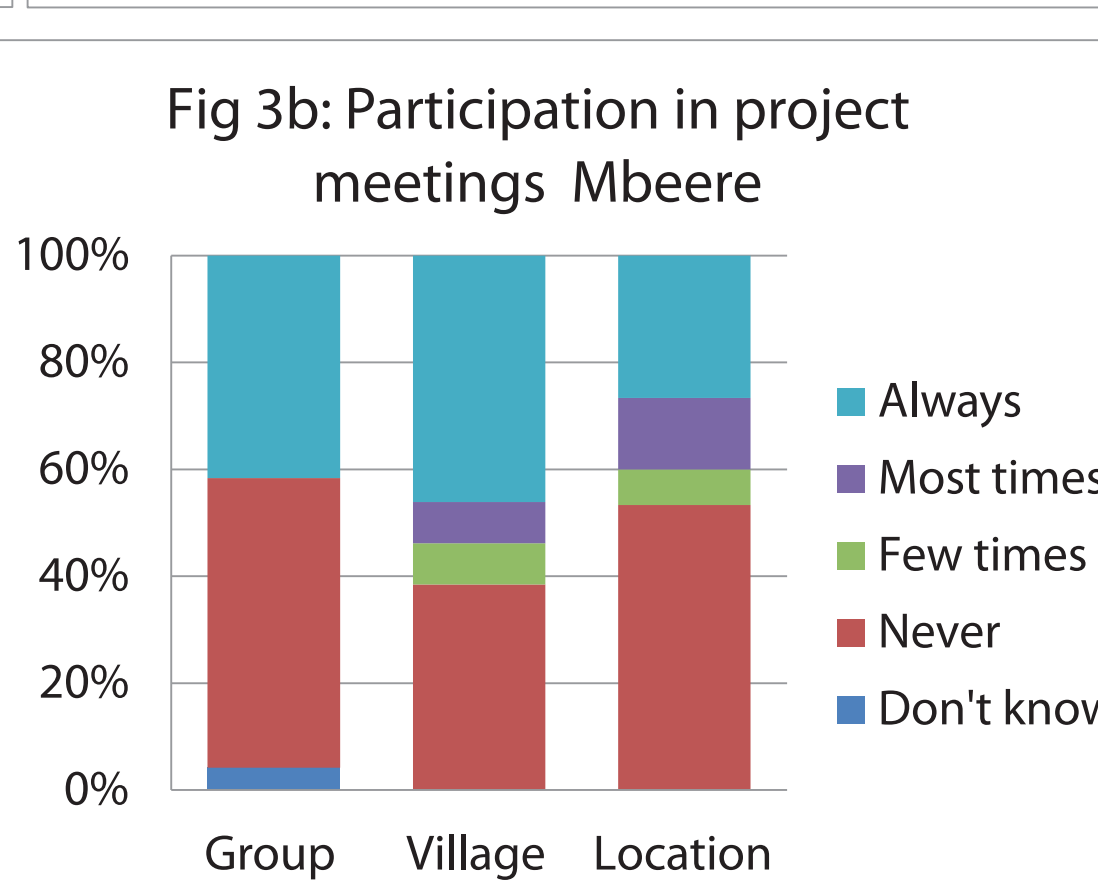
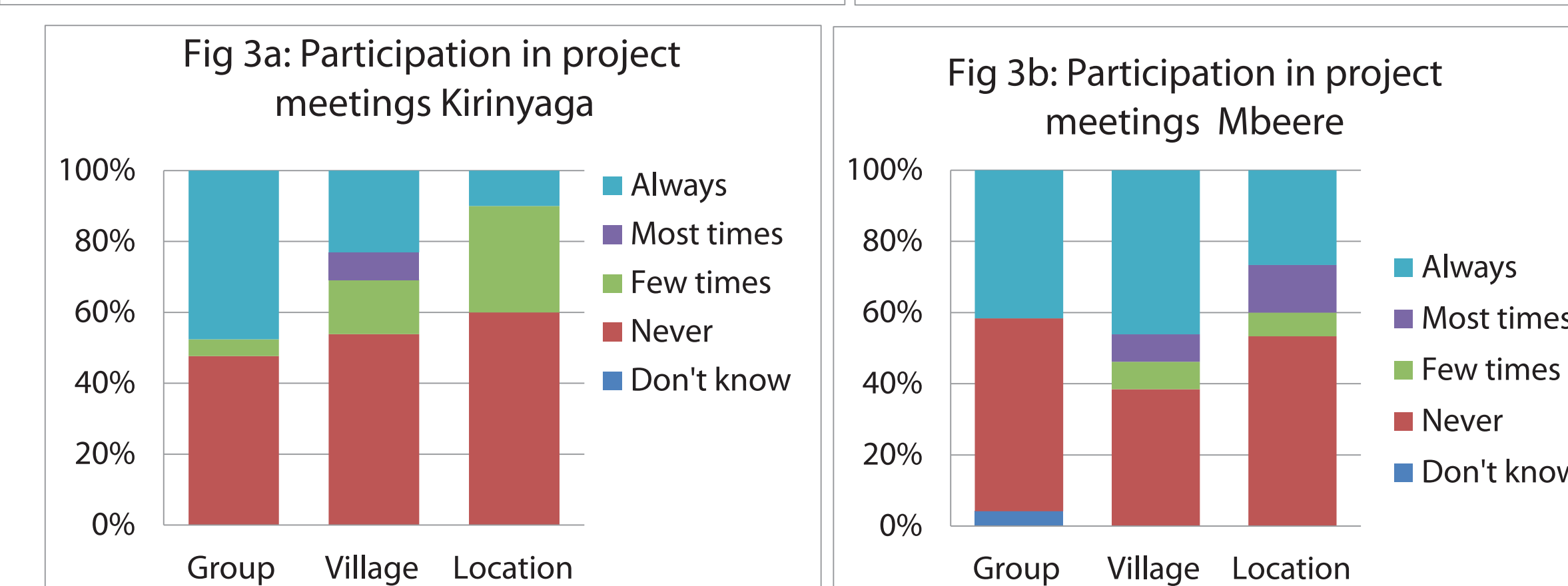
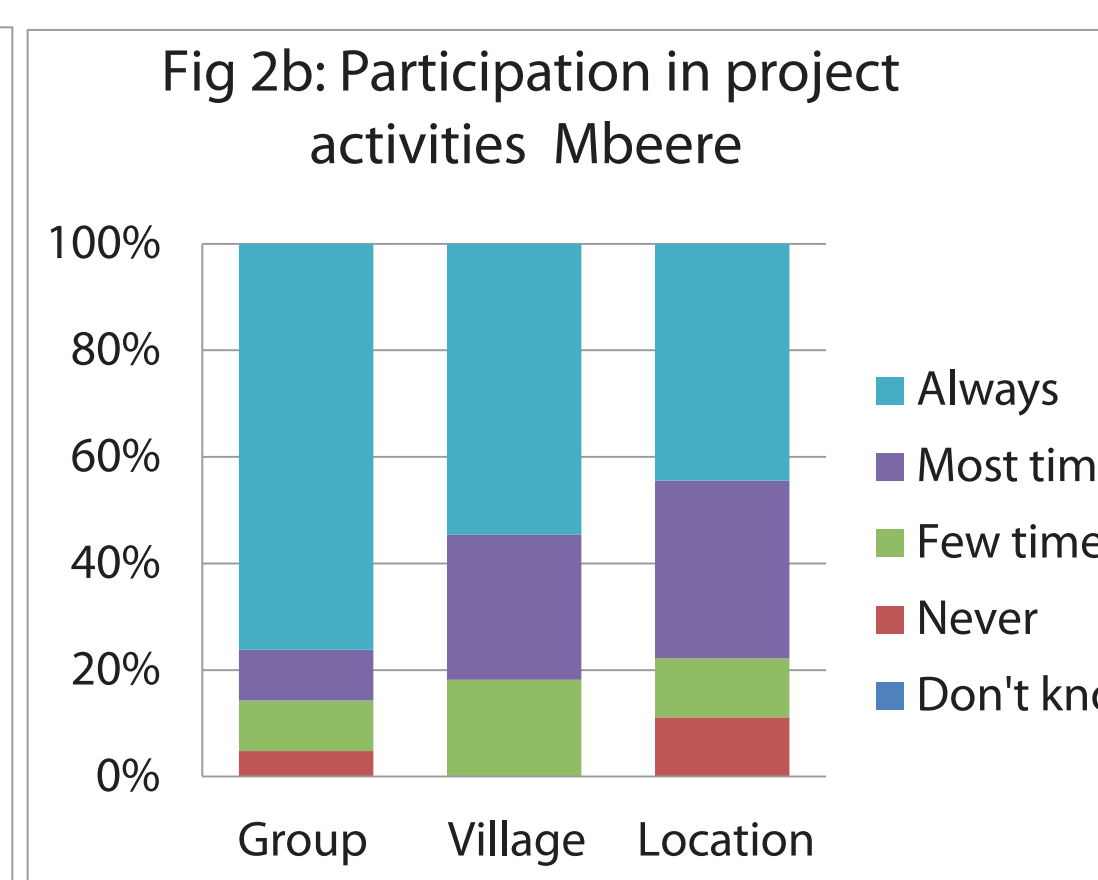
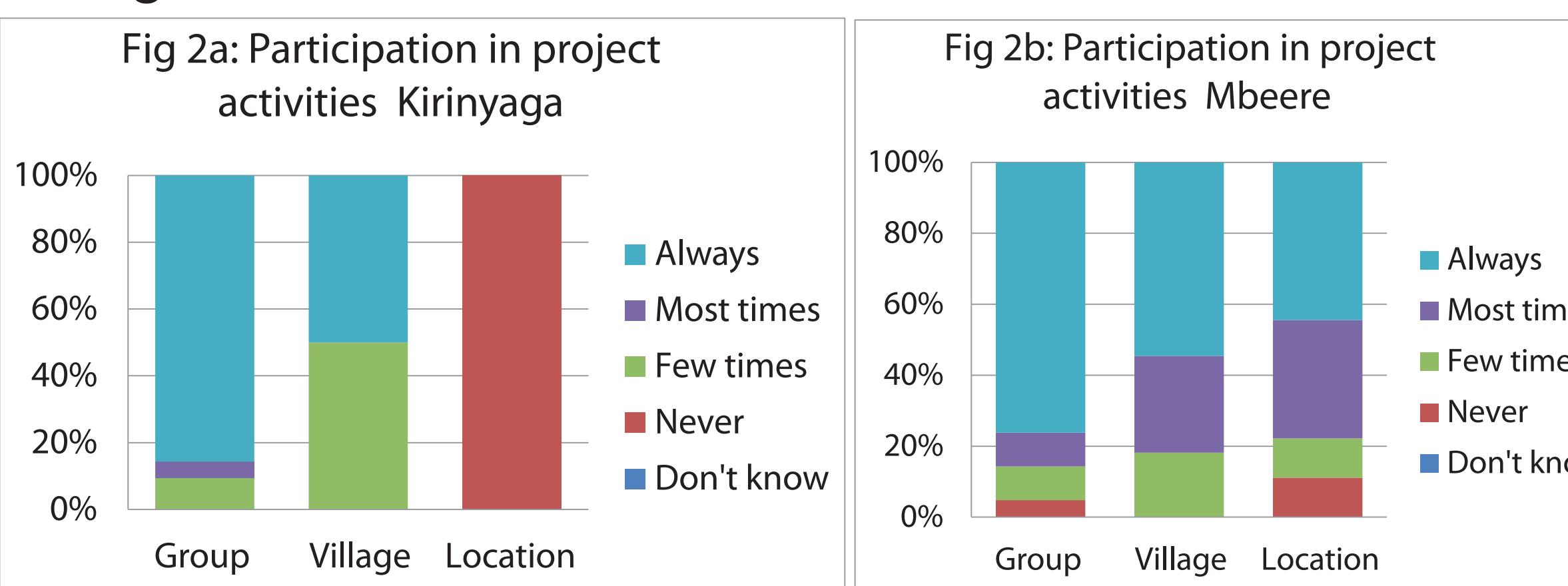
What is the depth of farmer awareness? Most (52% and 46%) said the project intervention is to provide extension service support; 24% and 56% not aware of how groups are selected to participate; 24% and 75% not aware of any M&E or believed not part of the project activities in Kirinyaga & Mbeere respectively.



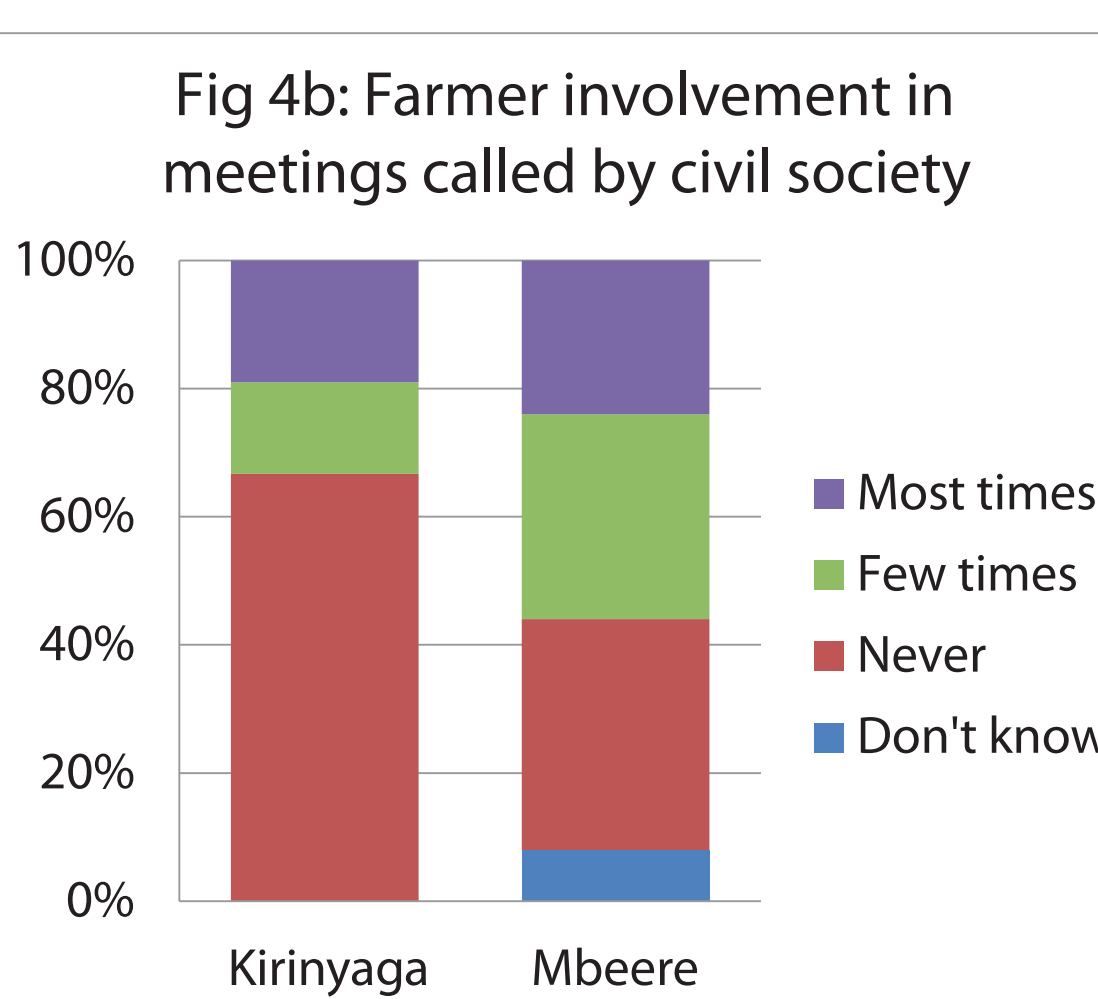
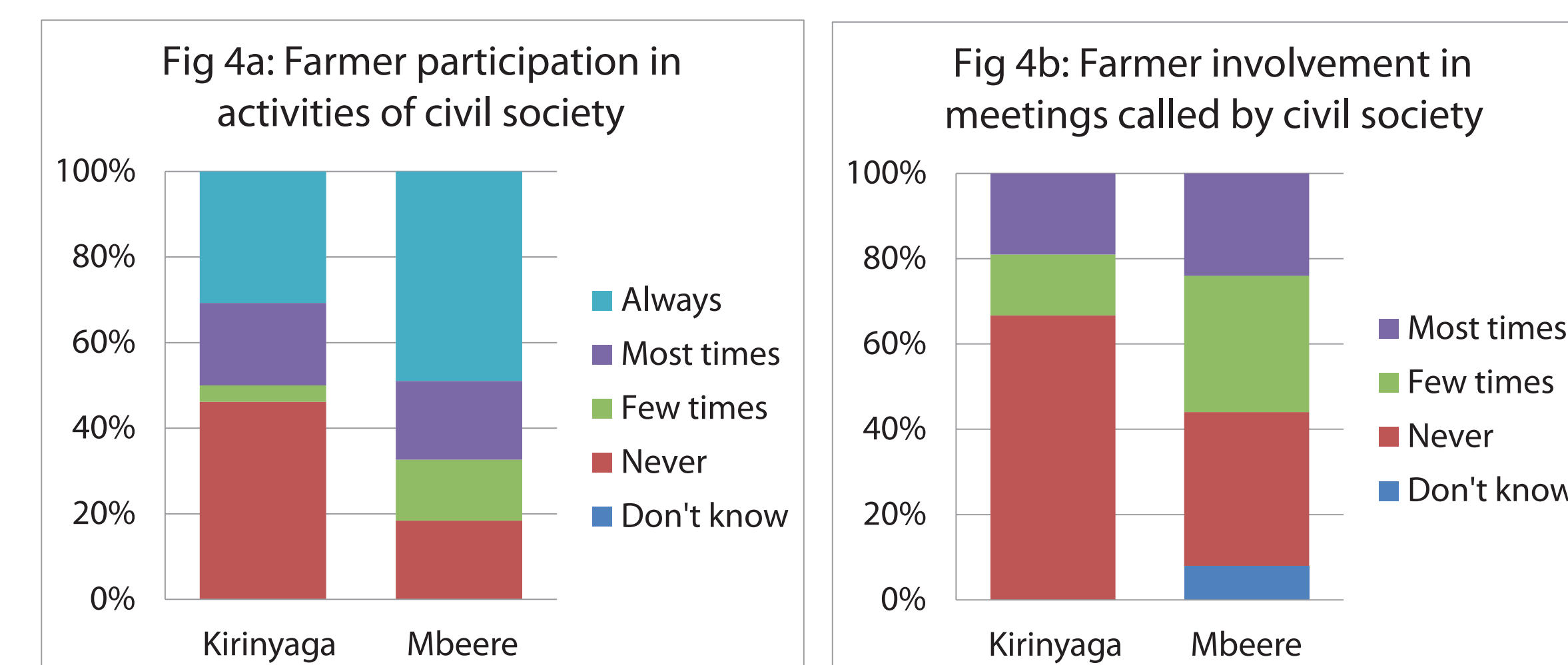
80% & 75% could identify a committee and its membership. 20% & 40% not aware of any organ/committee in Kirinyaga & Mbeere respectively. Greater ignorance (up-to 90%) on higher level organs and their roles Figure 1a, b.

### Participation

Farmers less likely to participate in activities that are removed from their homes e.g. location level although there is greater participation in Mbeere. Figure 2a, b.



A high proportion of farmers who never attend meetings Figure 3a, b. Farmers less likely to attend meetings that are removed from their area



Greater participation in activities than in meetings organized by civil society. Lower in Kirinyaga than in Mbeere Figure 4a, b.

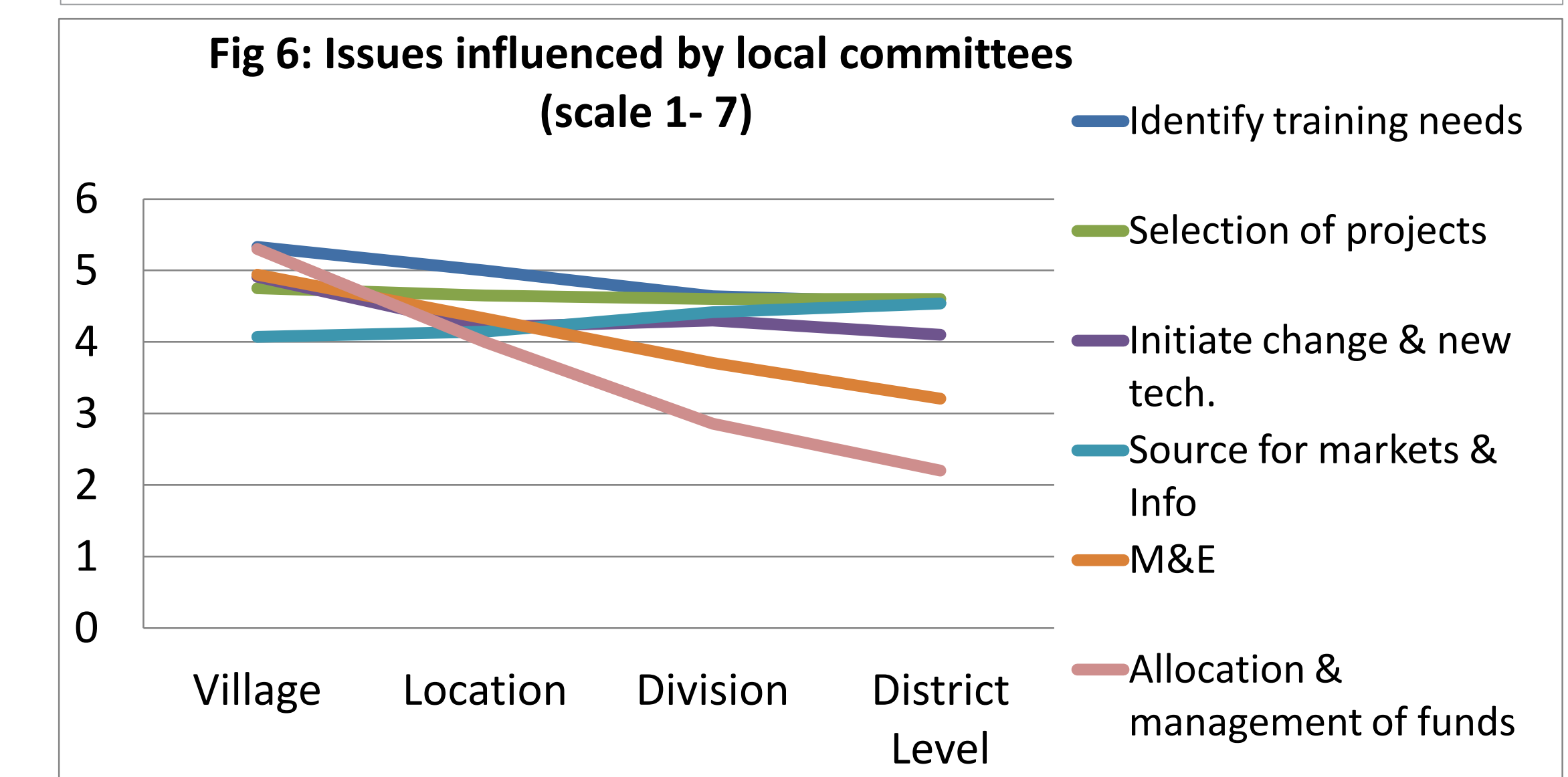
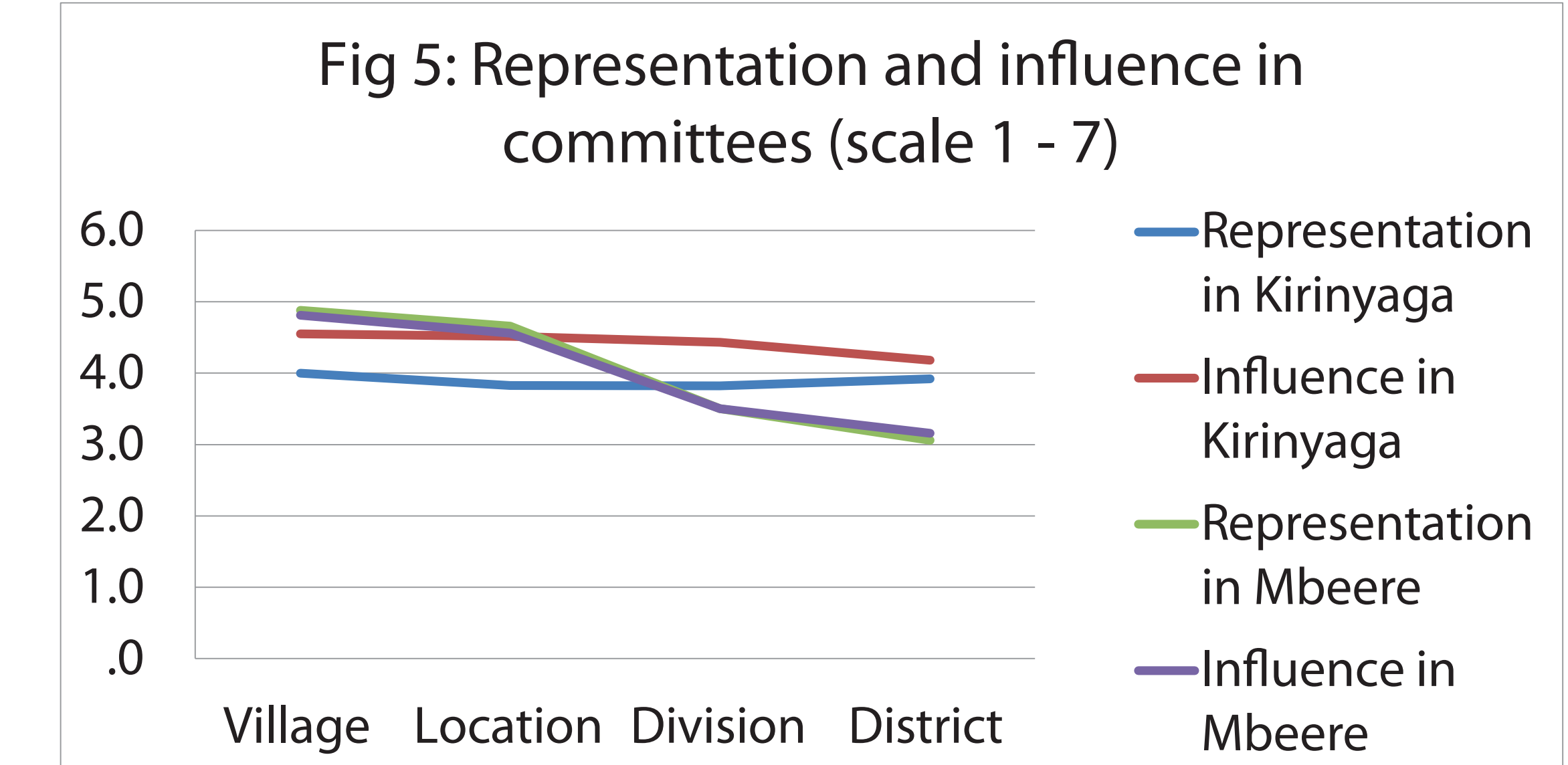
### Representation & Influence

How well are farmers represented and what is their influence?

- In key decision making organs the public sector is heavily represented while farmers and civil society representation is marginal
- Farmer representation reduces drastically in the highly influential committees such as the district agricultural committees (DAC)

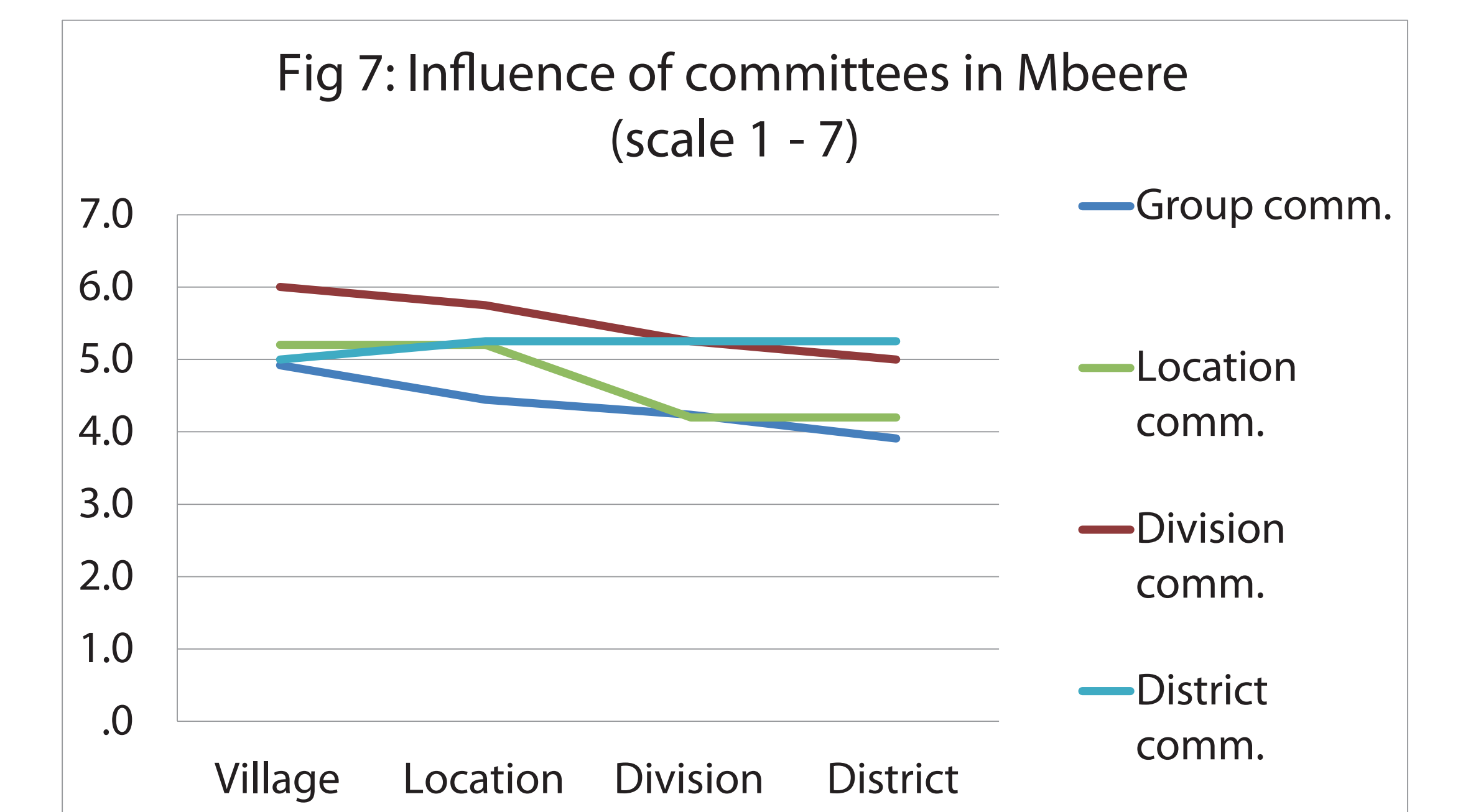
and programmatic committees such as the district coordination units(DCU)

- Lack of formal linkages between policy making organs - (DAC) and programmatic committees at district and lower levels means information flow from farmers is curtailed.
- Farmer influence high at village level but dwindles up the administrative hierarchy. Better in Kirinyaga Figure 5.



Local committee influence on all issues high at village level, but drastically reduces up the administrative hierarchy Figure 6. particularly in resource allocation and management, coordination and M&E.

The influence of group lowest of all and diminishes up the hierarchy of decision making organs Figure 7.



## CONCLUSIONS

Findings suggest farmers priorities may not be well represented in key organs. There is much room for improvement in farmer awareness, participation, representation and Influence in development programs.

Civil education key in sensitizing farmers on the importance of increasing the quantity and quality of their involvement. Meanwhile, the civil society is expected to represent the interests of the community.

Farmer awareness, representation and influence of civil society low and perception that influence is low.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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