

# Voices that count

*Using micro-narratives to organise systematic and real-time feedback on the inclusion of smallholders in modern markets.*



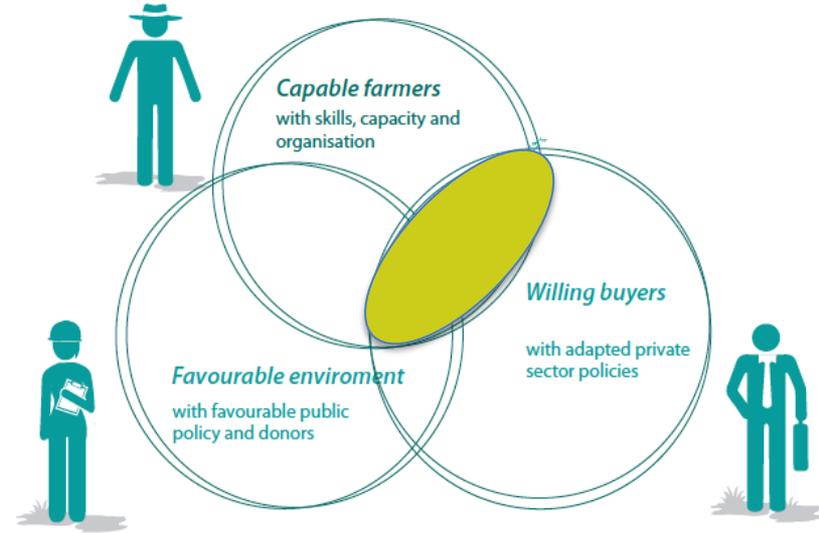
BILL & MELINDA  
GATES foundation

*Steff Deprez  
Performance Measurement Workshop 3.0  
Sustainable Food Lab  
January 21-22, 2015*

# SenseMaker for inclusive business

## Purpose

- To measure and better understand the changes in **inclusive business models** in smallholder chains
- Focusing on:
  - The **trading relationship** between buyers and organised farmers
  - The performance of the **smallholder organisation**
- As it is experienced and perceived by the **smallholder farmers** (and other chain actors)



Source: LINK Methodology (CIAT)



# SenseMaker for inclusive business

## A tool & an approach

- Lightweight
- Affordable and cost-effective
- Continuous data collection (monitoring)
- Fast feedback loops
- Facilitating learning, decision-making & communication
- To be complemented with other monitoring / assessment methods





# SenseMaker

- **SenseMaker®** is in essence a pattern detection software that comes with a methodology
- A narrative-based research method
- Based on collecting and tagging (signifying) large amounts of multiple “sense-making” items & fragments *Personal experiences, micro-narratives, pictures, reports, blogs, ... (any digital object that can be tagged).*
- Tagging = **self-signification**





# SenseMaker

- People use **fragmented materials to make sense** of the world around them. Micro-narratives are fundamental to human sense-making
- **Stories** that people tell are the filters through which they make meaning and take decisions
- Use **large amount of fragments** to make sense of reality. (e.g. a pattern that emerges on a carpet full of small pixels)



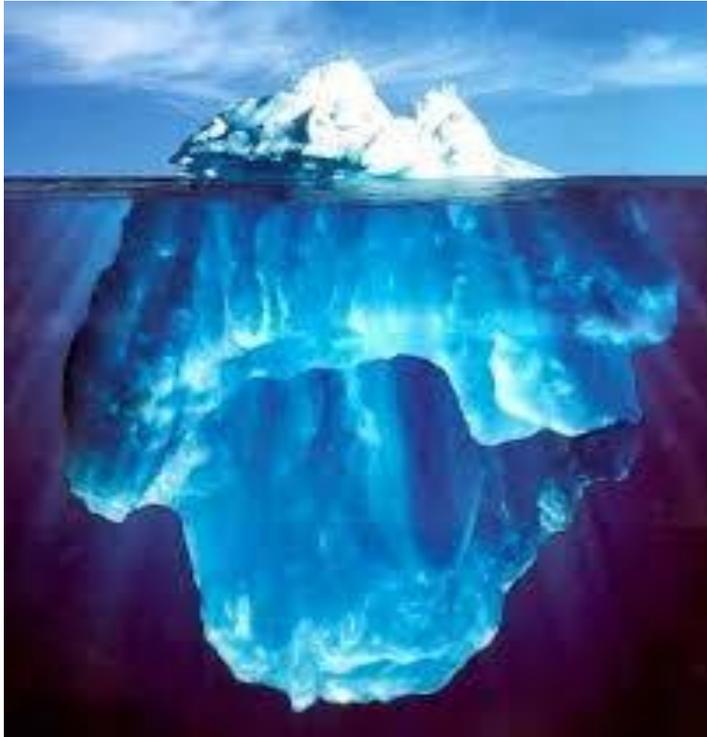


# Difference with conventional methods

- Reveal the reality/world as experienced and interpreted by those involved
- Short narratives, ...
- ... and lots of them - mass participation
- Combines qualitative & quantitative
- Harder to manipulate
- Hypothesis generative instead of hypothesis testing, i.e. information required to proof/illustrate a desired change.
- Bridging a methodological gap between case study and survey data.



# Stories are the tip of the iceberg



The experience or story = the tip of the iceberg, *i.e. what the storyteller has shared through the use of words.*

Through the questions in the signification framework we aim to reveal **additional layers of meaning** embedded and connected to the experience/story (*values, ideas, beliefs, ... around topics of interest*)

***The answers to the questions dyads, triads and MCQ's are always rooted in the experience***







# Preparation

## **1. Design of the Signification Framework**

*Linked to purpose & Use!*

## **2. Decide on the sampling strategy**

## **3. Operational plan for data collection**

## **4. Design the SenseMaker Collector Application**

## **5. Training of enumerators**





# SenseMaker

## 1 Collecting stories & self-signification

### Prompting Question

A **single** question that triggers people to tell a story or an experience?

The same prompting question for all



### Story capture



Written or spoken stories, photographs, video's, parts of documents, ...



- Stories are *not* large constructed stories explaining a point
- Mass capture (300 to +3000 stories) shows the diversity of perspectives
- All fragments add up to a set of multi-faceted impressions about the situation & topics of interests



# SenseMaker for inclusive business

## Prompting question

### Please share a story

*Think of a specific moment or event (that happened in the last 6 months) when you felt particularly encouraged or concerned about producing [crop] and selling it to [company]. Please describe what happened briefly. Who was involved?? Why did it happen? Where did it take place? ...*

- A **single** question that triggers people to tell a story they find meaningful?
- The prompting question is the same for all the people you collect stories from

*Respondents are mainly smallholder farmer (big numbers!) but can also include other chain actors such as farmer organisation leaders/staff, buyers, traders, processors service providers, ...*

# Example stories

We completely support the collaboration between the FO and the Company because they increase the price. If the price elevates, we can enjoy satisfying profit. However, I am worried about the change in market price. The company determine the price on their own without consulting farmers. Hence, farmers will experience lost if the market price of cocoa decreases. The past six months has been delightful, as a farmer, I can buy motorcycle because our yields are high and the price is also high. We are worried if the weather is changing, our cocoa will be destroyed by pests and diseases.

During this years harvest, we were attributed for the first time some 1.500t of paddy by the farmer organisation. For years already, we weren't able to get together with the farmer organisations there were other buyers that they found more important. We had contracted with the farmer organisation that everything was to be taken from the producer by the end of the month of July. This was very imported for us as during the month of August the rains come and we have experienced big quality problems as a consequence. At the end of the month of July everything was in our stocks but we were not the only to be very happy with this situation. The producers were too as they had space now in their own storage facilities to store the rest of their production

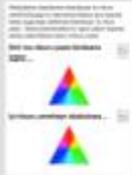
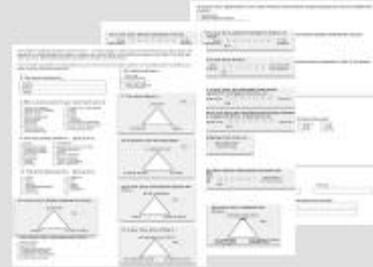
Based on my experience in the past 6 months, as members of FO UBP, I worry about lack of fertilizer, and spraying of cocoa fruits causing the quality of cocoa bean to decrease. We are worried that we still require more capital to be able to work with Amanah and meet their standard. I hope that more companies will work with Amanah because Amanah needs to be supported to increase their capacity in buying cocoa bean from farmers

I am from the Xuan Huong tea group. My story took place on June 15, 2010 when my neighbors and I attended in training on IPM held by the company and Plant protection station at the community house. It was boiling but farmers attended fully as there had never such a course before. Staff of station and company lectured. In break time, learners could talk freely about any issue. Some people said that their tea could not develop because they had sprayed chemicals to kill insects while others said that they did not know what kind of chemicals they sprayed but just sprayed randomly. If there had not been this training course, my plantation could develop as it does now.

In 2009 I started to grow plantain. The river is near the place where I produce plantain. When it overflows, that really means a loss to me, because the roots start to rot away. Now my problem is the market. I feel worried because we can only sell a part of the plantain production. If the fruit is very small, we can't sell it, which means a loss, too. Then we have to sell it to the intermediaries. The place where I grow plantain is beyond Yanzatza in the sector of Chimboza. The motivation of the plantain production is at a personal level. Although I know the plantain production will remain stable, now I am also producing cocoa, and the harvest has just begun.

In the morning of June 25, 2011, Mr. Lam, the collector noticed us the price 2200 dong a kg. I picked up tea and carried to his house for selling. In the morning, I sold him at 2200 dong a kg as informed but the price in the afternoon was down to 1800 dong per kg. I told him why there exist two different price level on the same day. We argued with each other and he replied because my buyer price level is going down, I have no way by reducing the level as well. I got frustrated and decided to transport to the Company and sold them at 2500 dong for a kg. I felt very glad. As from that day, I just sold to Company and did not sell to the collection team any more..

## Self-Signification



Respondents decide what the story means  
(based on pre-defined topics of interest)

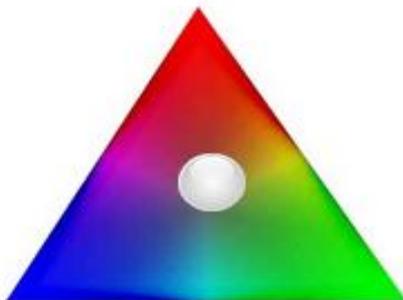
*To understand the stories better, storytellers are asked to answer a set of questions about their stories*



# Triad questions

11. In your story, the farmer organisation/cooperative ...

sell to anybody



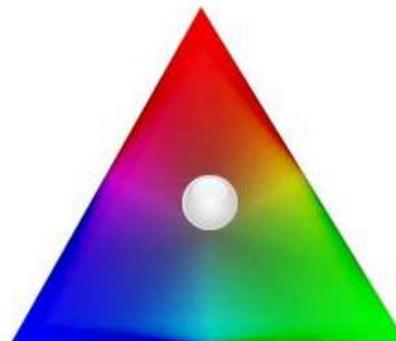
only sell to the one company because they prefer them

Not Applicable

only sell to the one company because there is no other option

20. To improve the outcome of your story, people need ...

timely access to information



access to (pre-) finance

Not Applicable

access to technical support

*Storytellers position the dot within the triad*





# Dyad questions

9. In your story, the capacities of the farmer organisation to adequately engage in business with the private company are ...

not sufficient



satisfactory

N/A

10. In your story, the capacities of the company to adequately engage with farmer organisations are ...

not sufficient



satisfactory

11bis. In your story, farmers ...

sell only through the farmer organisation

N/A



sell to anyone

12. In your story, farmers who produce and sell to the company ...

do not know the end product

N/A



feel proud about the end product

*Storytellers position the dot somewhere on the slider*





# Multi-choice questions

## 26. Who was directly involved in your story? (pick up to 3)

- producers / petani
- farmer leader / pimpinan petani
- farmer organisation / organisasi petani
- input supplier / penyedia saprotan
- processor / prosesor
- transporter / penyedia jasa transportasi
- service provider(s) / penyedia jasa lainnya
- middle-men or intermediary / pembeli lokal atau kaki tiga
- buyer or trader / pembeli (perusahaan)
- retailer / retailer
- consumer / konsumen
- development organisation / LSM
- local or national government / pemerintah daerah atau pusat
- financial institution / institusi keuangan
- other / lainnya (tolong disebutkan)

if Other, please specify here:

## 27. Your story is mainly about... (pick up to 3)

- quantity / kuantitas
- quality / kualitas
- pricing / harga
- certification / sertifikasi
- credits or investments / kredit atau investasi
- transport / transportasi
- labour / tenaga kerja
- policies / kebijakan (pemerintah)
- information or communication / informasi atau komunikasi
- other / lainnya (tolong disebutkan)

If Other, please specify here:

## 29. How common is this sort of story? (pick 1)

- happens all the time / terjadi setiap saat
- quite common / biasa terjadi
- Happens sometimes / kadang-kadang terjadi
- Quite rare / jarang terjadi
- never happened before / tidak pernah terjadi sebelumnya

## 28. This story makes you feel ... (pick up to 2)

- proud / bangga
- angry / marah
- frustrated or disappointed / frustrasi atau kecewa
- happy / senang
- indifferent / biasa saja
- encouraged / termotivasi
- sad / sedih
- worried / khawatir
- satisfied / puas

## + demographic questions

- Gender
- Age
- Your position/role in the supply chain



# Collection of stories & signification

## Pen & Paper



## Tablet (Android or Ipad) App: SenseMaker Collector



## Online Collector

SenseMaker\_Inclusive\_Business  
(en)

11. In your story, the farmer organisation/cooperative ...

sell to anybody



only sell to the one company because they prefer them  
 Not Applicable

only sell to the one company because there is no other option

11bis. In your story, farmers ...

sell only through the farmer organisation  
 NA



sell to anyone

← →

8/28

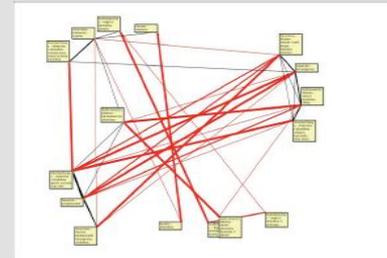
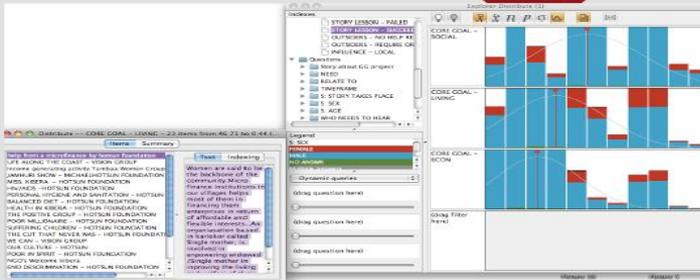
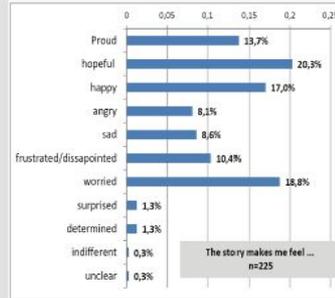
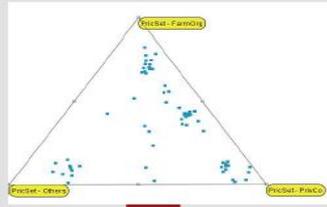
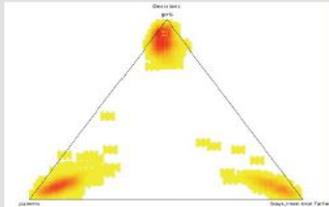




# SenseMaker

## Visualising Patterns

### Pattern Seeking Analysis

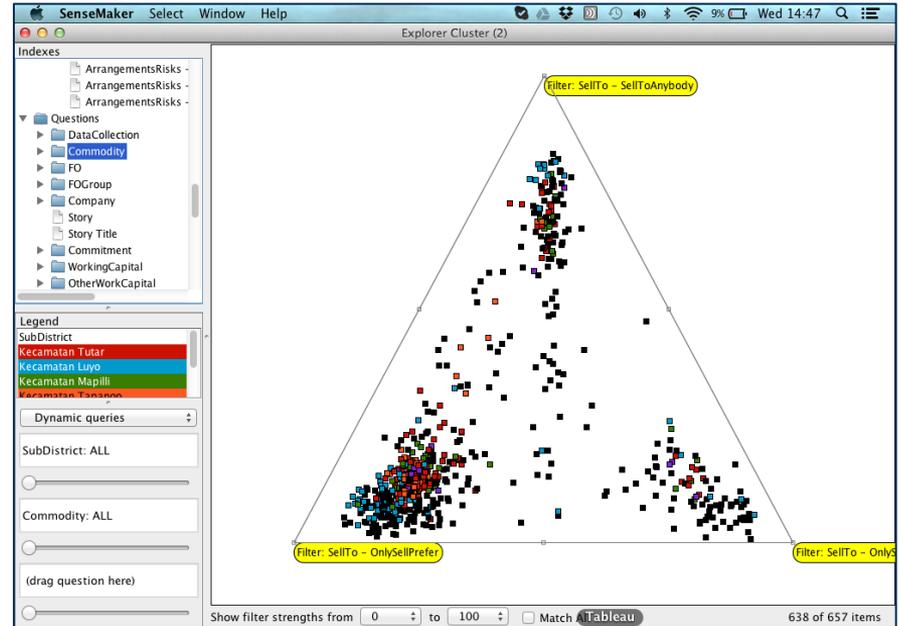


Patterns reveal the world through the eyes of the storytellers





- ✓ Statistical software based on signification framework
- ✓ Quick identification of visual & quantifiable patterns
- ✓ The original story (fragments) can be directly accessed

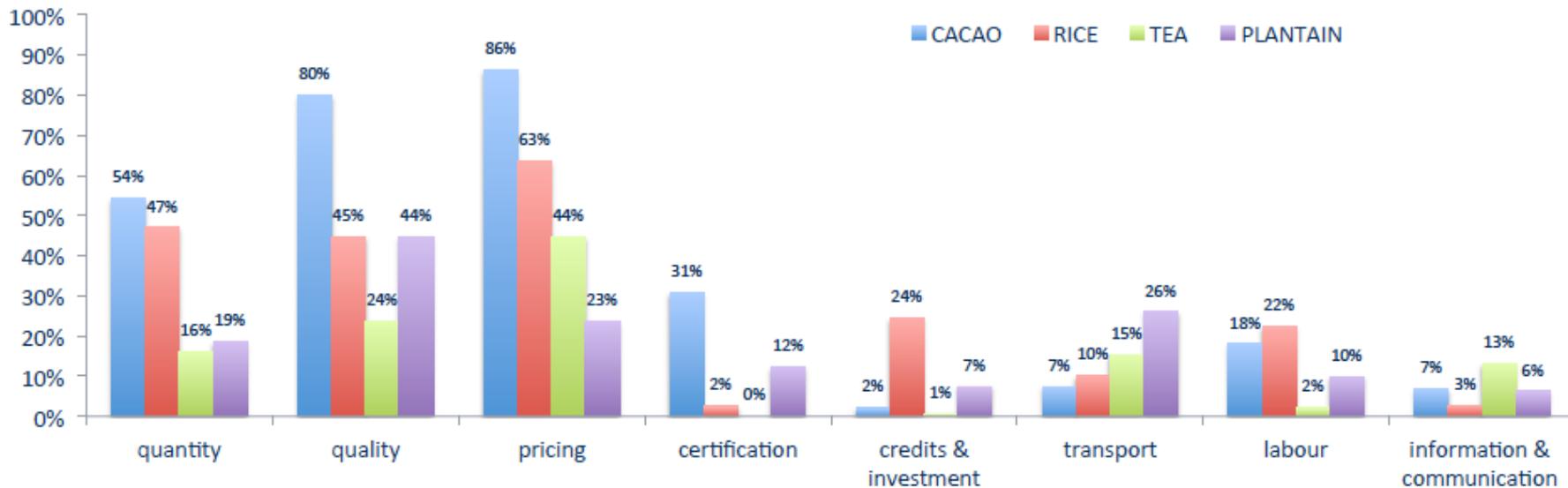




# Pattern detection

General nature of the stories

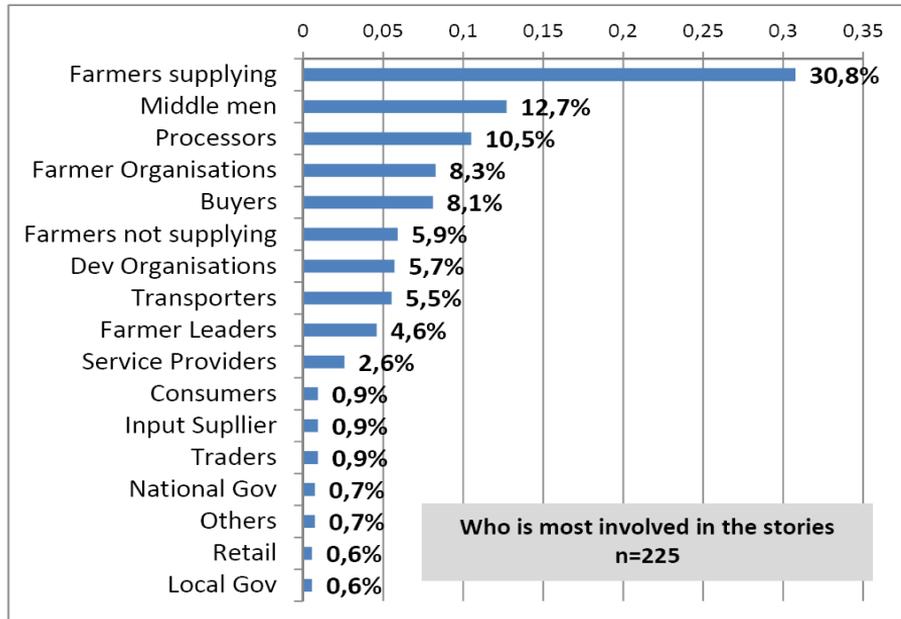
## Example



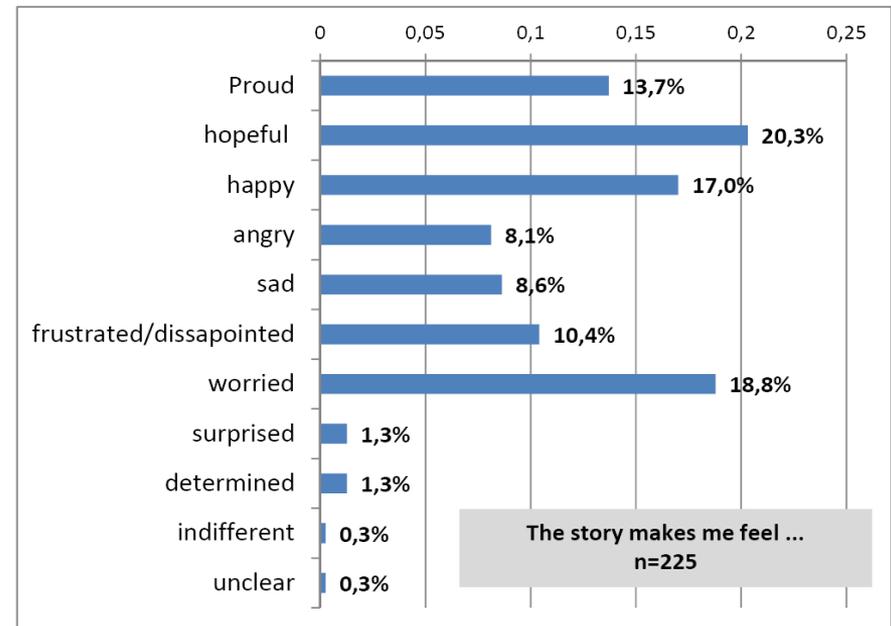
*The story is about?  
Comparing 4 different chains*



### Example



*Who is involved in the story?*

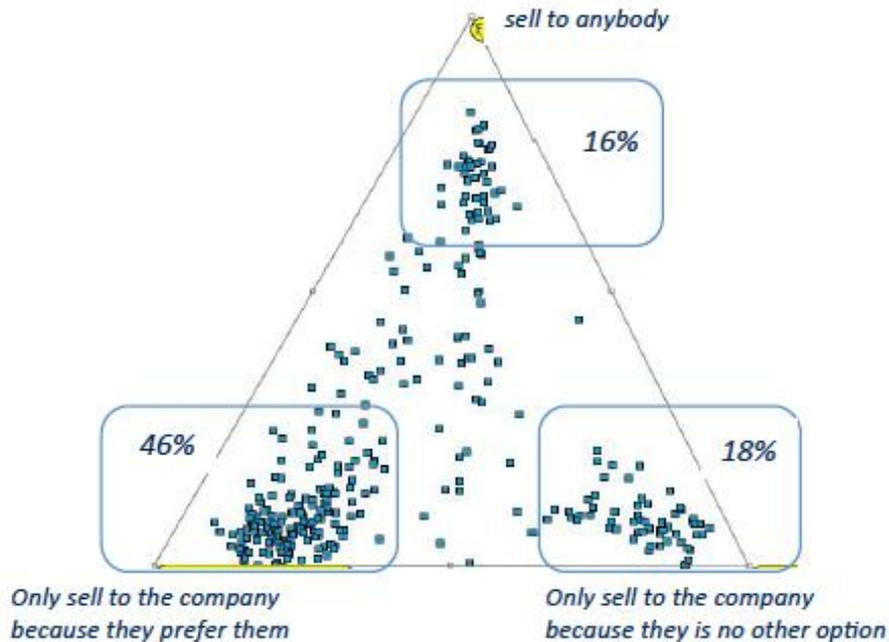


*What is the feeling associated with the story?*

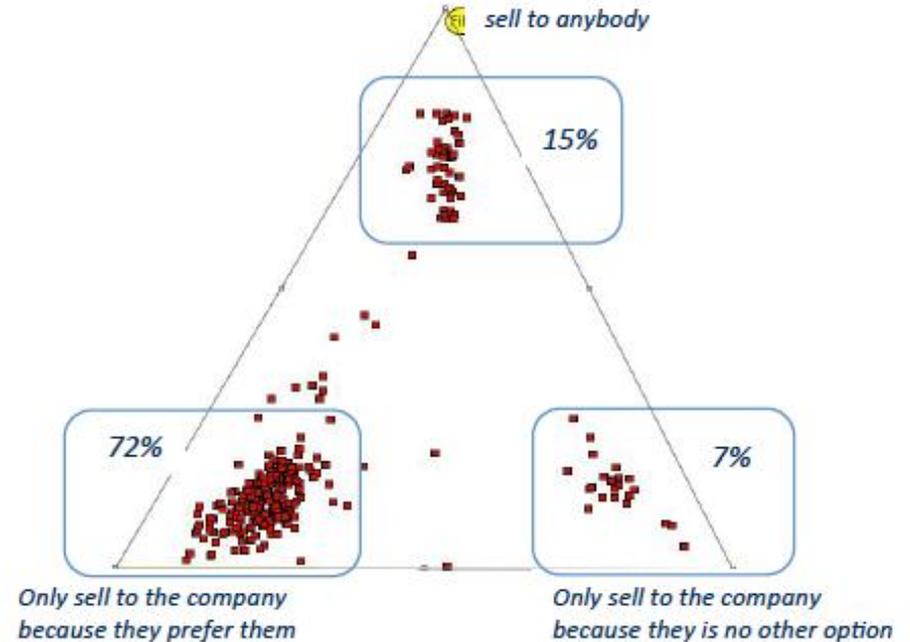


# Pattern detection

*In your story, the farmer organisations/cooperatives ...*



**Rice Chain**

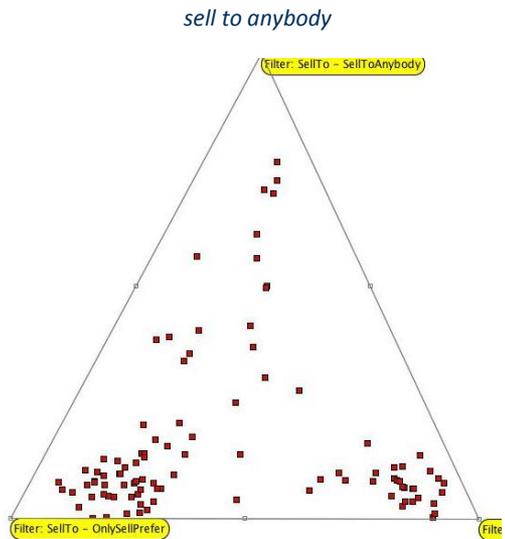


**Cacao Chain**



# Pattern detection

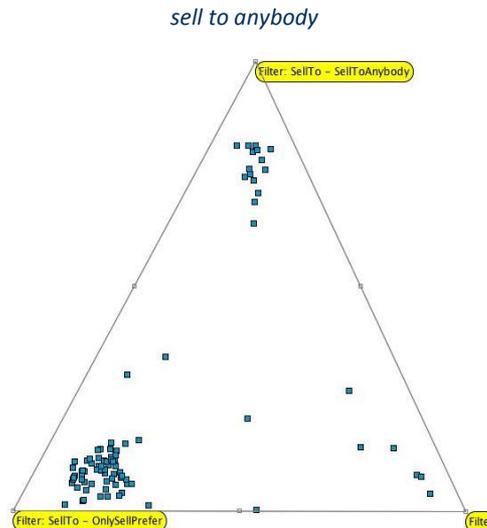
*In your story, the farmer organisations/cooperatives ...*



*Only sell to the company because they prefer them*

*Only sell to the company because they is no other option*

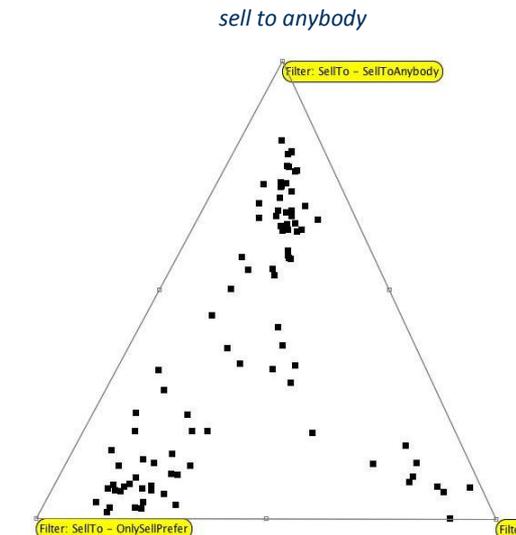
**Cacao  
Sub-district 1**



*Only sell to the company because they prefer them*

*Only sell to the company because they is no other option*

**Cacao  
Sub-district 2**



*Only sell to the company because they prefer them*

*Only sell to the company because they is no other option*

**Cacao  
Sub-district 3**



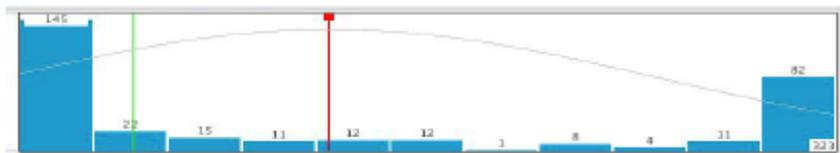


# Pattern detection

*In your story, farmers who produce and sell to the company ...*

*Do not know the end product*

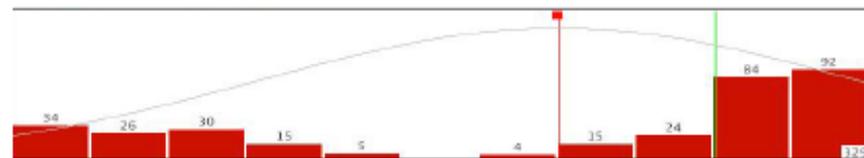
*Feel proud about the end product*



**Cacao Chain**

*Do not know the end product*

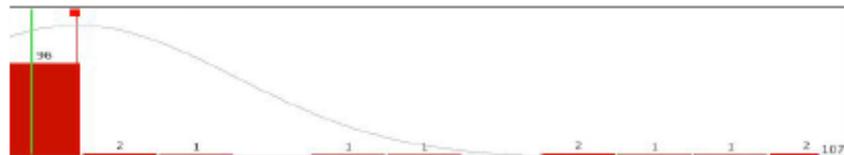
*Feel proud about the end product*



**Rice Chain**

*Do not know the end product*

*Feel proud about the end product*



**Tea Chain**

*Do not know the end product*

*Feel proud about the end product*

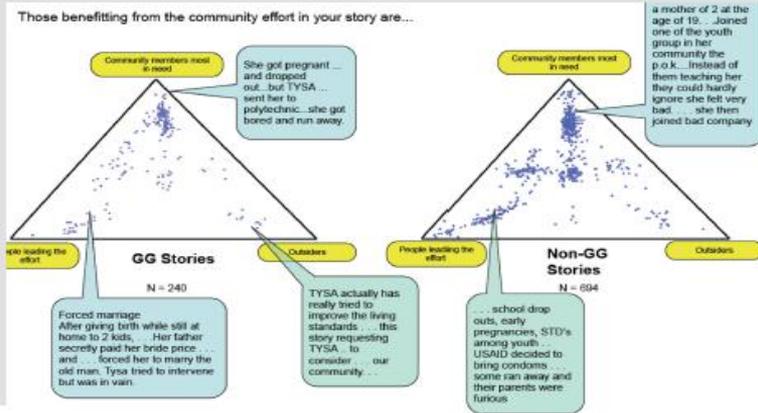


**Plantain Chain**

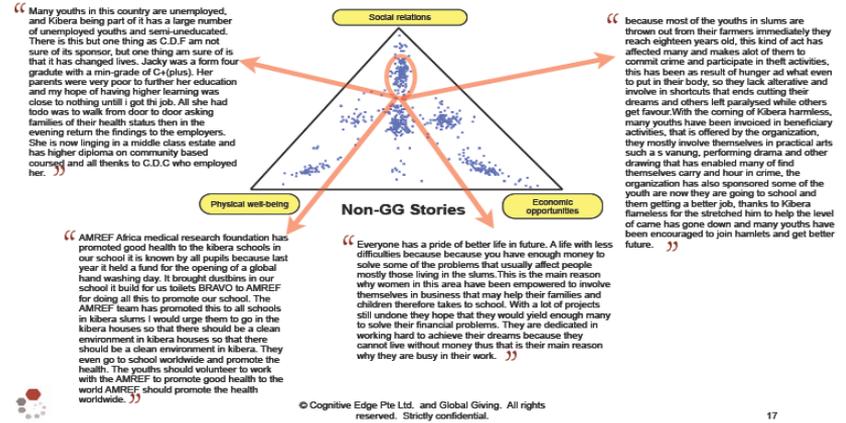


# Identifying story packs

Those benefitting from the community effort in your story are...

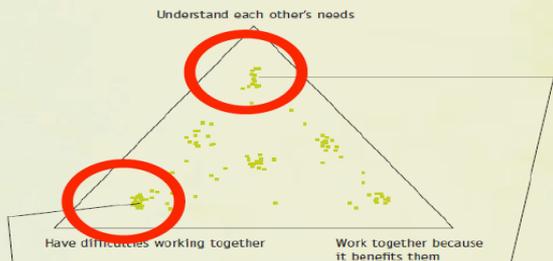


Diving into the data - each datapoint represents a story, directly accessible by the analyst



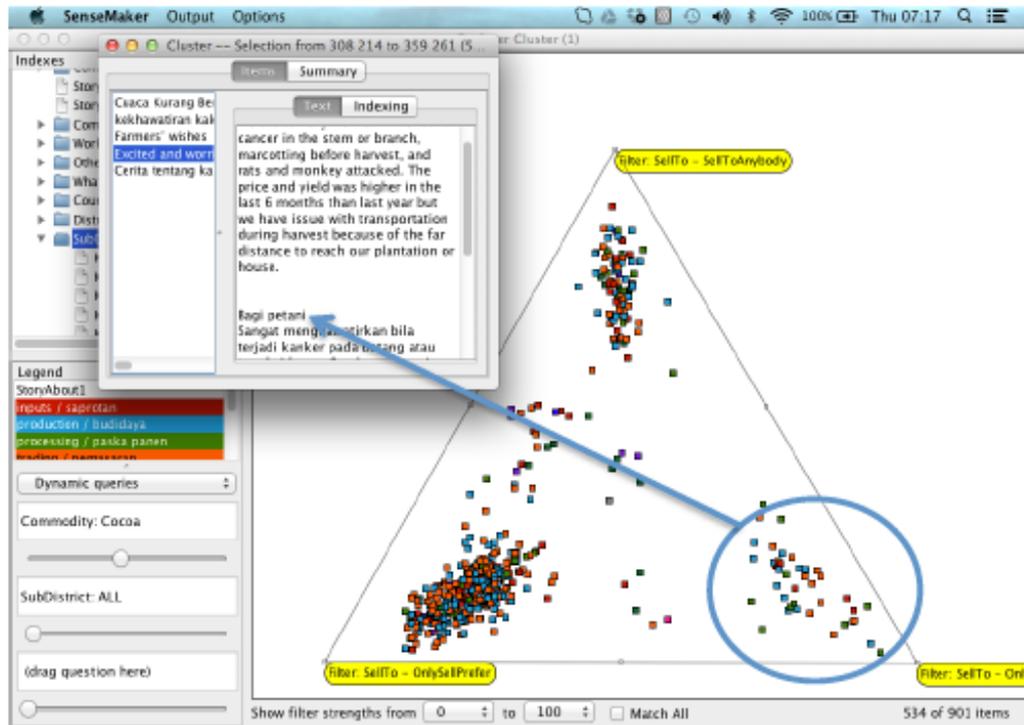
# Identifying story packs – reading stories

In your story, companies and farmers ...



*'On November 17, 2011, I attended a training about pruning techniques held by the tea company. I learnt about how best to prune tea and applied this on my plantation. Several days later, the tea company staff visited my plantation to check my pruning method. She praised me, as I had strictly followed the guidelines provided, so they decided to subsidise 54,000 dong for pruning. I felt very encouraged when the tea company helped my family.'*

*'We produced tea to sell to the collection team and then this team would buy it to sell to the tea company. The collection team said that they would sell to the tea company at 3,500 dong per kg and pay farmers 3,100 dong per kg. Two days later, the price paid to farmers by the collection team was just 2,800 per kg and three days later, the price was lower, at 2,500 dong per kg. We farmers did not know how to drive a motorbike so we could not transport to sell but relied on the collection team. This story happened in May 2011. Although we got paid at a low price, we still had to sell. We left the tea to grow without reaping it as the money that we got failed to compensate us for our labour.'*





# SenseMaker

## Deepen Insights & Inform Action

### Human Sensemaking

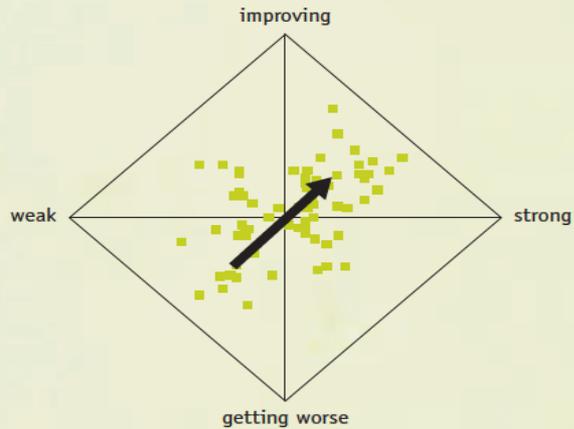
- ✓ Feed the results and patterns back to respondents & other relevant actors
- ✓ What does it mean for people involved?
- ✓ Read selected story packs & debate
- ✓ Make meaning of what the stories as a set reveal
- ✓ Generate insights on patterns & topics of interests
- ✓ Select 'archetypal' stories
- ✓ Conclusions & recommendation for action



## Act upon insights & signals

- Enforcing beneficial patterns
- Dampening non-desirable patterns

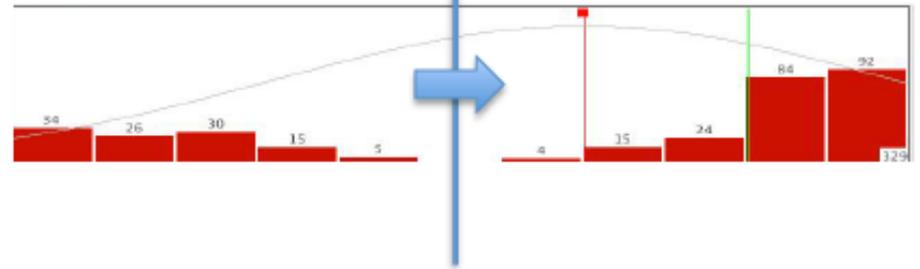
*In your story, capacity of farmers to engage in business is strong/weak and improving/getting worse*



*In your story, farmers who produce and sell to the company ...*

*Do not know the end product*

*Feel proud about the end product*



# Advantages

- Quick analysis of qualitative material – making sense distributed (fragmented) information from multiple sources and interactions
- Measuring interventions with clear goals but with less certainty about the pathways of change, and which need rapid feedback loops to make real-time adjustments
- Provides insights into the different perspectives, attitudes, and values of different actors around topics of interest
- Can be used as a means of weak-signal detection, i.e., the detection of hidden and/or emergent opportunities/threats
- It generates evidence-based 'hard' and 'soft' data

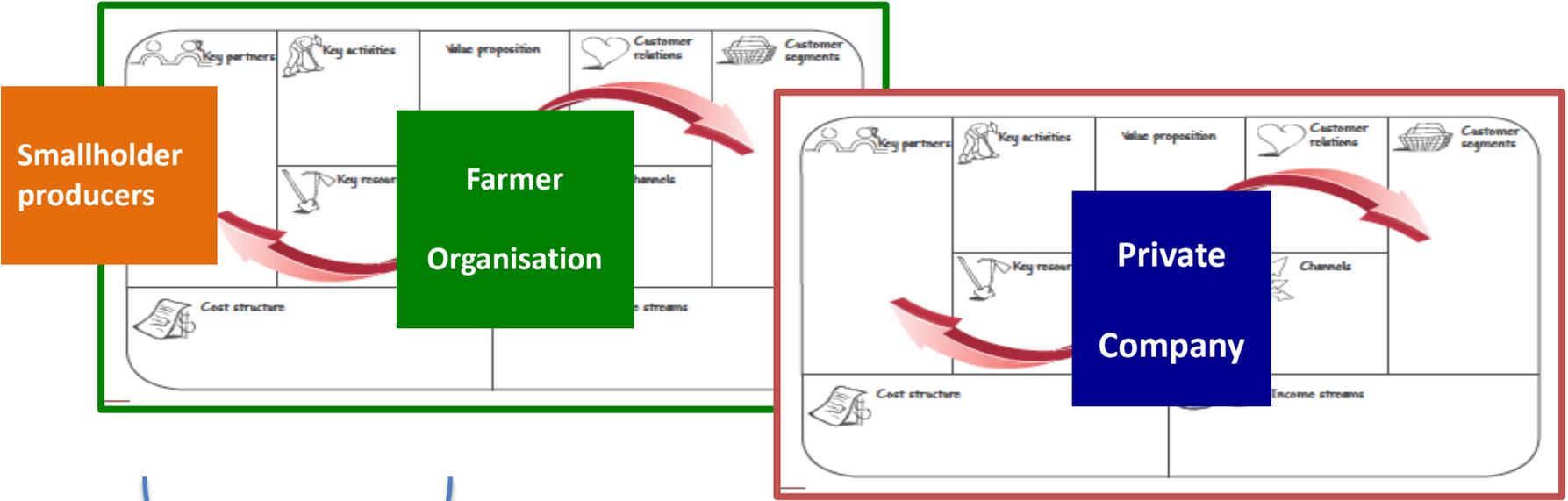


# SenseMaker for Inclusive Business

- Questions are linked to the logic and dimensions in **existing models and conceptual frameworks on inclusive business** such as:
  - The principles of new inclusive business models (LINK methodology)
  - Shared approach for performance measurement in smallholder chains (Sustainable Food Lab)
  - Producer Organisation Assessment frameworks (COSA, ScopeInsight, VECO,...)
- *Best used to in trading relationship whereby both the buyer and the smallholder suppliers make efforts to generate shared value (social, economic and environmental) and invest in long-term profitable relationship.*



# Focus & scope signification framework



Source: LINK Methodology (CIAT)

Relationship, shared value generation including organisational & management issues between farmers and their organisations

+

Trading relationship & shared value generation between buyers and organised farmers



“Library” of possible signifiers & modifiers



# Contact



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