

Intro to TIST 4: TIST Structure



Small Groups are the Foundation of TIST

Welcome back! In this training you will learn about TIST Small Groups. TIST Small Groups are the most important part of TIST. When you form your Small Group, you will be working together for at least 60 years (the length of the GHG contract)! TIST Small Groups are where TIST members come together to share information, learn from each other, and build each other up. Over 10,000 TIST Small Groups exist across Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and India. Each of these groups is comprised of farmers just like you, working together to grow trees and fight the effects of climate change.

In this training you will learn about how TIST Small Groups are structured and how that structure fits into the entire TIST program. This will provide you the knowledge to better understand how communication is passed between Small Groups.

What is a TIST Small Group?

TIST Small Groups are made of 6-12 members who come from at least 3 different families who all live near each other. Good TIST Small Groups are made up of people who are hard-working and embody the TIST values. Small Groups are made up of friends and neighbours, and they are a place for TIST members to grow as leaders. In order to join TIST, you must belong to a Small Group. Many prospective TIST members speak to their family and neighbours about starting a Small Group.

By starting or joining a TIST Small Group, you are committing to certain responsibilities to both TIST and your Small Group. These responsibilities are:

- Commit to planting at least 1,000 trees per year for 5 years**
- Meet at least one time per week**
- Sign the Green House Gas Contract Together (to learn about the Green House Gas Contract, please take the Green House Gas Contract training module)**
- Embody the TIST Values (See the "TIST Value" Training)**
- Use rotational leadership and Kujengana (more on these topics later in this training)**

The Benefits of TIST Small Groups

TIST has operated using Small Groups from the beginning, and TIST members have found Small Groups to be the best way for sharing information and building relationships. After over 20 years of working in farmer-led Small Groups, TIST has discovered valuable benefits to Small Groups. These benefits are:

- TIST participants get much more work done in Small Groups.**
- Small Groups help TIST members be accountable to each other. When one person is successful, the whole group is successful. If someone does something bad, the whole group is harmed.**
- TIST Small Groups allow members to share encouragement and experience.**
- TIST Small Groups are made of people from at least three different families so that different people will have the opportunity to lead, meet new people, and learn from new people.**
- TIST Small Groups help achieve the TIST Value of Big Results with a Low Budget.**
- TIST Small Groups are nurseries for leadership development, and many small group members go on to serve with TIST in other ways.**

Rotating Leadership

Rotational Leadership is a core part of the TIST Small Group. TIST Small Groups will work together for over thirty years, and each person in the group will have the opportunity to act as the group leader. This ensures that every person in the group has the opportunity to participate as both a group member and a leader.

In a TIST Small Group, there are three leadership roles:

- Leader - the Leader is a servant to the group, and facilitates the meetings and makes sure each person in the group is able to participate.**
- Co-Leader - The Co-Leader helps the Leader facilitate the group and serves as the group time-keeper. The Co-Leader becomes the Leader at the next meeting.**
- Accountability Person - The Accountability Person reminds the group of their responsibilities and previous and current commitments. The Accountability Person becomes the Co-Leader at the next meeting.**

Rotating Leadership is practiced at every level of TIST, including both Small Groups and Clusters (Clusters will be introduced later in this section). Leadership is rotated at every meeting (weekly), with the Co-Leader becoming the Leader, the Accountability Person becoming the Co-Leader, and a new Accountability Person being elected.

Elections are done democratically and each person in the TIST Small Group has an equal vote.

Leadership alternates between men and women at each level of TIST. This means that if the current Accountability Person is a man, the next one will be a woman. Thus the leadership always alternates between men and women.

If you are taking this training as a small group take time to identify your group leader for this week, and then decide who will be group leader the next time you meet. By doing this you will start practicing the TIST Small Group best practices immediately!

Benefits of Rotating Leadership

There are many benefits to rotating leadership, listed here:

- Every person as the opportunity to serve as a leader
- Every person has different gifts to offer. We don't always know what they are until we have been given a chance.
- There are equal opportunities for both men and women, and so no one is left out.
- Rotating Leadership encourages leadership for new people and for people who are shy.
- People can volunteer as a leader without having to commit for many years.
- We get to learn from each other about what makes a good leader.
- Rotating Leadership makes sure there are new ideas and types of leadership used in each group.

Role of a Leader

In TIST a Small Group the leader has a set of core roles and responsibilities they must follow. These are:

- Should be a servant to the whole group.
- Should exemplify the TIST Values
- Coordinates the Small Group meeting and facilitates the meeting schedule
- Motivates the Small Group
- Works with the Co-Leader and Accountability Person
- Welcomes and introduces any visitor who might come
- Passes on any communication from the local TIST Cluster Servant
- Reminds Small Group members of the next meeting
- Facilitates the election of the new Accountability Person

Role of a Co-Leader

A Co-Leader also has specific roles and responsibilities he or she must follow in the TIST Small Group meetings. These are:

- Takes over if the leader cannot attend
- Helps during the Small Group meeting by keeping time
- Takes records of the meeting and any discussions held
- Reads the previous meeting minutes to the group
- Helps to train the newly elected Accountability Person

Role of Accountability Person

The Accountability Person also has very specific roles and responsibilities within the Small Group. These are:

- Keeps and maintains records of the Small Group
- Helps support the Leader and Co-Leader
- Trains the next Accountability Person
- Helps communicate to the Cluster Servant

What is Kujengana?

Kujengana is the Swahili word that means "to build up," and it is something that is done at the end of every TIST meeting. Kujengana is a very important part of each weekly Small Group meeting, monthly cluster servant meeting, and TIST seminars. It is at the very foundation of the TIST values. Each person in TIST has their own special talents and gifts that they bring to TIST. Every person is a leader, and every person has something valuable to contribute. Kujengana is the practice of saying this value out loud.

This is how Kujengana is practiced:

- Before the closing prayer, every person in the group says one specific, positive thing that the Leader did at the meeting. Comments have to be specific and refer to something they saw or heard the leader do. Think of it as something that a "fly on the wall" would see and hear. It is not a general statement like "the leader did a good job," but rather a specific comment like "the leader kept time, smiled, encouraged all group members to speak and made me feel welcome." Each member needs to say something different.
- Everyone gives Kujengana to the leader. Some groups also give Kujengana to the Co-Leader.
- In addition, if someone sees a gift shown by the Leader, a group member can also say that.
- In response to Kujengana, the leader simply says "Thank you." There is no discussion of how things could have been done better or differently.
- With Rotating Leadership, everyone gets the chance to give and receive Kujengana.

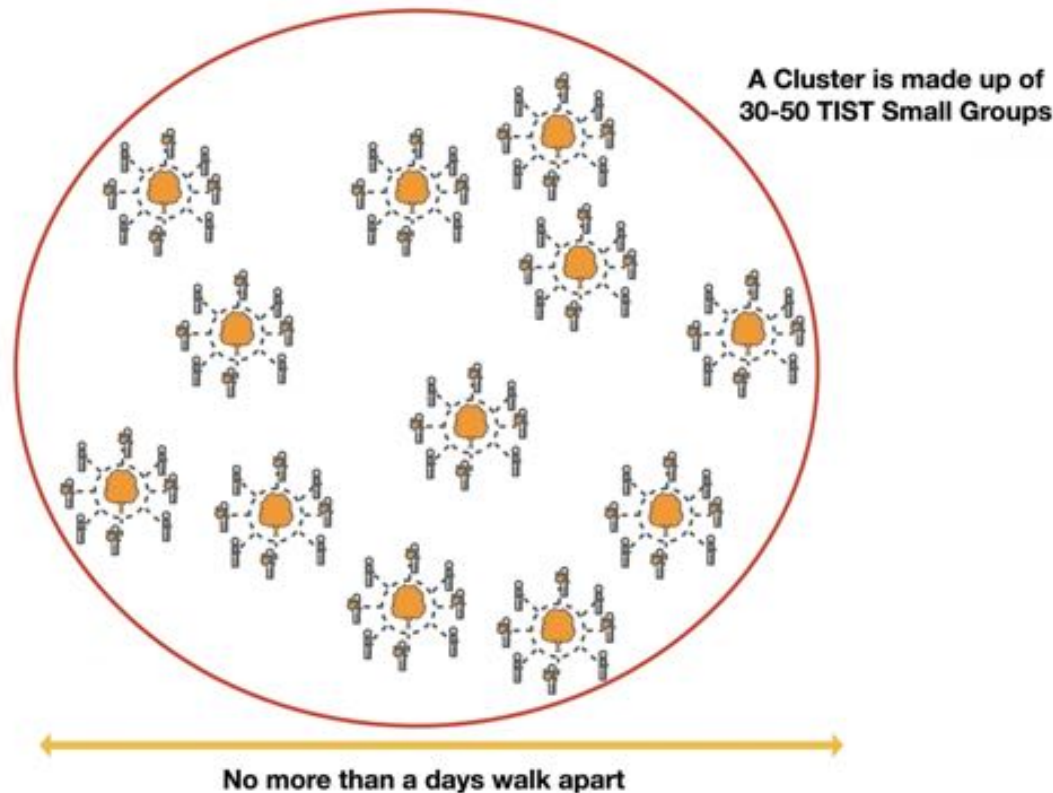
Benefits of Kujengana

Why do we practice Kujengana? Because it has many wonderful benefits to everyone in TIST. Here are some of the benefits that TIST members have reported from Kujengana:

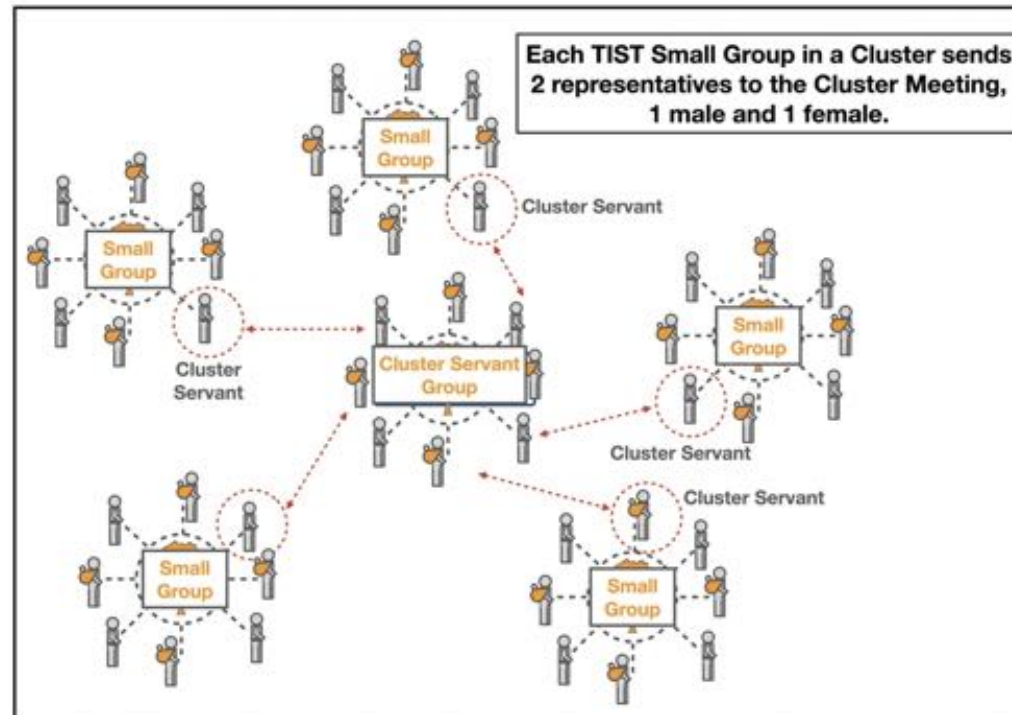
- This practice brings confidence to leaders who they they have done something good.
- Kujengana helps future leaders to learn from the success of current leaders.
- This practice encourages people to become leaders.
- Kujenagan helps people to thin about what makes a good leader.
- Every person contributes to every meeting with Kujengana.
- Kujengana is important for growing many leaders in TIST.
- With Kujengana, we learn to identify and celebrate positive qualities in other people.

TIST Clusters

Each TIST Small Group is also part of a larger "cluster" of Small Groups. A cluster is a collection of 30-50 TIST Small Groups which are within walking distance of each other:



Every month, each TIST Small Group in the Cluster sends two representatives (one man and one woman) to a Cluster Meeting. These individuals are called the "Cluster Servant." These Cluster Meetings are held in a central place that everyone can walk to. These Cluster Meetings happen once per month, and they use the same roles as the TIST Small Groups by also having a Leader, Co-Leader, and Accountability Person.



At the Cluster Meeting participants:

- **Receive the monthly TIST Newsletter, which they take back to their TIST Small Group.**
- **Receive payment voucher for their TIST Small Group's tree planting activity.**
- **Share experiences and news with members of other TIST Small Groups in the area.**
- **Receive additional training.**

There are certain requirements necessary for to qualify and form a Cluster. For 30-50 TIST Small Groups to become a cluster, they must:

- **Have planted a collective minimum of 200,000 trees.**
- **A recommended 80-100 hectares of land set aside for tree planting.**
- **Have nursery beds to raise seedlings for members and teach tree nursery organisation.**

Cluster Leaders

The Monthly Cluster Meetings are also led by a Leader, Co-Leader, and Accountability Person. However, unlike the TIST Small Groups, which rotate leadership weekly, the Cluster Meetings rotate leadership every 4 months. This means that each leader in the Cluster Meeting will have a total of 1 year/12 months of service (4 months as Accountability Person, 4 months as the Co-Leader, and 4 months as the Cluster Leader).

Just like in the TIST Small Groups, women and men alternate roles. And again, just like in the TIST Small Groups, when a Cluster Leader ends their tenure the Co-Leader is the new Leader, the Accountability Person becomes the new Co-Leader, and a new Accountability Person is elected. The Accountability Person is elected democratically, and elections are mandatory for all TIST Clusters.

The Cluster Leader, Co-Leader, and Accountability Person have the same roles and responsibilities as the leaders in the TIST Small Group. However, in the Cluster Meetings, these members also have additional responsibilities, covered below:

- **CLUSTER LEADER**

- Coordinates quantification and trainings schedules for the Small Groups
- Helps Cluster to remain strong and united
- Encourages the use of Conservation Farming practices
- Works with the Accountability Person to ensure a monthly Cluster Report and Accounts Report are created, accurate, and sent to TIST Leadership.
- Helps recruit and register more TIST Small Groups
- Helps TIST Small Groups have their Green House Gas contracts signed, scanned, and uploaded.
- For payments, gets vouchers and other materials before Cluster Meeting. Works with Accountability Person and the Cluster Servants to make sure the proper payment process is followed and communicates any questions or problems to TIST leaders and coordinators.

- **Cluster Co-Leader**

- Assists the Cluster Leader as needed.
- Maintains accurate meeting notes and records used in creating the Cluster Reports.

- **Cluster Accountability Person**

- Keeps Cluster Records organised in a Cluster Record Book.
- Allows inspection of Cluster Records to Cluster members and TIST leaders.
- Sends month Cluster Report to TIST leaders.
- During payments, hands out vouchers to the TIST Small Groups that have two members present, reviews vouchers, communicates with payment support specialists, and follows the payment process accurately and honestly.

Benefits of Clusters

There are many benefits to the TIST structure of Small Groups and Clusters. Many of these benefits are listed below:

- Clusters help us to keep costs low so there is more carbon credit money left for farmers.
- Clusters provide TIST farmers the opportunity to learn from each other about local challenges and successes. Clusters allow groups to easily communicate between one another.
- TIST trainers and educators are able to give trainings to many people at one time, who will then take that training back to their Small Groups.
- Cluster Meetings provide an efficient way to pay TIST participants.
- Because Cluster Meetings are larger (60-100 people), there are opportunities for other programs like table banking.
- Cluster provide a network for education and passing on the TIST newsletter, called Mazinga Bora (Kenya), The Tree (Uganda), and Chezhimai (India)

Conclusion

TIST, you have successfully reached the end of this training. If you are taking this training as a Small Group take a moment here to practice Kujengana for your Group Leader. And if you have not elected a Co-Leader and Accountability Person yet please do so now.

Thank you for participating in this training. In the next training you will learn how to become a TIST Small Group.