

WaLETS Results Dissemination in Burundi on 3rd November 2016.



Figure 1: Group photo of Burundi Participants

The two year WaLETS research project (2014 - 2016) that focuses on rice, maize and beans as pilot crops; aims to establish the ways in which policies and investments in the EAC countries can support trade facilitated food security, enhance the function and quality of ecosystem services and empower women and youth.

The project has now reached the dissemination phase where the research findings are shared with multiple stakeholders to guide sustainable production of food staples.

On 3rd November 2016, a half day workshop was held in Bujumbura, Burundi in order to disseminate WaLETS findings to a number of Burundi stakeholders.

The workshop was officially opened by the Assistant Minister of Agriculture and Livestock: Ir. Jacqueline



Figure 2: Ir. Jacqueline NDAYIHANZAMASO Assistant Minister of Agriculture and Livestock

so. In her opening remarks, the minister mentioned that Burundi food security index is 24.0 very low compared to the fellow EAC countries: 41.1; 33.7; 35.1 and 42.8 for Kenya, Rwanda Tanzania and Uganda respectively. She added that the situation is exacerbated by land degradation with soil nutrient

losses between 150 and 200 MT/ha/year. Ir. Ndayihanzamaso further expressed her hope that she would like the WaLETS project research results to contribute towards alleviating environmental and food security challenges in the country.

Dr. Joseph Mudiope gave an overview of what Kilimo Trust does within the EAC region and he specifically elaborated on the individual projects implemented by the organization. After that he talked about the genesis of the

WaLETS project where he explained that the East African Common Market (EACM) is not being used effectively to ensure that regional trade and markets provide the right signals in relation to the value of all ecosystem services. He said that as a result there is limited financial and other incentives to support investment and practices for: i) building resilient food and nutrition security; ii) enhancing provision of other ecosystem services, both to and from landscapes used for food production; and iii) more equitable access to ecosystem benefits across gender groups. Therefore, he added that WaLETS was designed to address the above challenge, but with an emphasis on food trade.

Participants were keen to know more about Kilimo



Figure 3: Dr Birungi Korutaro explaining KT projects implementation

Trust, particularly its approach in selecting and implementing projects as well as its future strategies and plans for Burundi. Dr Birungi, the WaLETS project team leader, responded to all the queries from participants. She further described Kilimo Trust's consortium approach that is used in project implementation. She also mentioned Kilimo Trust's donors and implementing

partners which include Burundi government through ISABU, the national research organization.

Dr Joseph Mudioppe, the main speaker of day presented all WaLETS results with emphasis on the four project outputs - Policy analysis, Scenarios Analysis, Crops suitability maps, and Gender analysis.



Figure 4: Dr Mudioppe presenting WaLETS results

After the presentation, the participants asked numerous questions and made contributions. The findings were well received and participants from NGOs and government said that there were some efforts to support crop intensification in some areas without considering the agro ecological suitability. A typical case mentioned by the participants was the rice intensification in Kirundo province, which is unsuitable for rice production but the government and World Bank are pushing for intensifying production of rice in that area.

Participants from the MINAGRI mentioned that a new Agricultural Investment Plan (PNIA) is under development and they promised to incorporate WaLETS findings in the new plan.

During a group work session participants were tasked to identify and suggest strategies and methods of including WaLETS results in the organizations/institutions' programs, policies and projects. The following were the suggestions from the various group categories:

Government officials promised to address crop intensification programs based on agro ecological potential. They stressed the need of developing a national fertilizer and livestock restoring policies in order to regulate fertilizer application and apply Integrated Soil Fertility Management Approaches with an emphasis on combining chemical with organic fertilizers during production.

The private sector made a commitment to sensitize fellow members on Eco System Management and incorporate mechanisms of payment for ecosystem services utilized. However, they recommended their involvement in policy making and awareness

creation towards ecosystem management, valuation and food security.

NGOs and BDSs participants mentioned that they will be more mindful of crop suitability while developing intensification programs. They also suggested a meticulous process of choosing projects beneficiaries which should be followed so that women and youth are included in development programs.

Youth and women emphasized that they will undertake awareness creation of men, women and youth on the benefits of gender equity towards food security and ecosystem management through agricultural trade. They also said that supporting women's associations and cooperatives is important in order to increase access and decision making over resources by the different gender groups.

Universities and researchers mentioned undertaking collaborative research while involving youth and women in all stages of new technologies development and other researches.

We need Action

After the workshop, the Minister of Agriculture and



Figure 5: WaLETS team with the Minister of Agriculture and Livestock

Livestock, Hon. Dr Déo Guide RUREMA, invited the WaLETS projects team to his office. He wanted to know more about Kilimo Trust and WaLETS in particular, as well as prospective projects to be implemented in Burundi. The WaLETS team leader gave a brief overview about

Kilimo Trust and its approaches. Thereafter, the minister stated that "Burundi need partners of

action like Kilimo Trust.” He informed us that MINAGRI has been chosen by the government of Burundi to pilot the road map for national development. And in order to deliver this task, he has created a statistics unit in the ministry to monitor and evaluate national development. He further mentioned that there are areas of collaboration especially in data management. He requested Kilimo Trust to consider Burundi as priority in the next phase of the project. The minister also pledged his support if Kilimo Trust is to implement any other project in the country to support increased production, productivity and linkage to markets: The minister’s concluding remarks were “I am here to work”.

New lessons from WaLETS findings

After the meeting a number of selected participants were asked about what they learnt as new or fascinating lessons and what should be added to make the findings more interesting.

Ir. Suzanne Hatungimana, a representative of the



Figure 7: Ir Suzanne HATUNGIMANA mentioning the catchy point from the WaLETS findings

She was fascinated by the obvious fact that increasing women participation in trade and access over household resources enhances food security and ecosystem management. She added that these findings should constitute a guide for designing any project/program at community level. She said that it would be interesting if the research could show in terms of numbers the benefits and losses of including women in trade in relation to food security and Ecosystem management.

women’s association against climate change stated that, considering their day-to-day activities, **women are considered the enemies of the environment.**

Mr. Emmanuel Bizimana, a representative of a grain trader’s association and a lecturer of agribusiness at Burundi National University was pleased by the project’s consideration of trade as the key element in promoting food security, ecosystem management and gender equity. He stated that many interventions and programs target only producers instead of the entire value chain. **He said that**



Figure 6: Mr. Emmanuel BIZIMANA expressing his excitement about WaLETS findings

usually traders are considered to be cheater and thieves. He added also that the **Burundi culture does not allow women to get involved in trade especially cross border trade.** In his view, this project’s findings should be a starting point towards mindset change on the perceptions of traders and trade. He also asked the WaLETS research project to come up with a road map that involves all stakeholders in reducing transport costs and other trade barriers.

Hon. Hussein JUMAINE the former Minister of Agriculture and Livestock in Burundi and a



Figure 8: Hon. Hussein JUMAINE, Consultant at World Bank Burundi

consultant to the World Bank in Burundi said that the research results were important especially the results on crop suitability. He revealed that **many interventions are supporting crop intensification in various regions of Burundi without taking into account the**

suitability criteria.

He pointed out the case of Kirundo province in which the government and other donors

are supporting rice intensification yet the WaLETS results are showing that the region is not suitable for rain fed low land rice. He suggested that, given that suitability criteria are changing overtime, such studies should keep being updated in time. He also requested that further research should include other commodities and varieties so that each region can have its suitable crop.

These research findings should not be kept in the office drawers.

Professor Chantal KWIZERA, the dean of Agricultural department at National



Figure 10: Professor Chantal KWIZERA, the dean of Agricultural department at National University

University stated that WaLETS research project matches exactly the main issues that Burundi is facing. She said that many research projects focus on breeding and

production without considering crop suitability and market aspects. She was interested in the evidence shown on the importance of involving youth and women in trade. She stressed the need for value addition through food processing as one of the ways to attract youth in agriculture and also address sustainable ecosystem management. She strongly recommended Kilimo Trust to be involved in implementation of the recommendations generated.

WaLETS results dissemination through Media

In addition to the workshop, WaLETS results were disseminated through national media. Dr



Figure 9: Mr Désiré HAKIZIMANA, a program assistant at Kilimo Trust explaining the objective of the workshop in national languages

Birungi Korutaro, was interviewed by the Burundi national radio and television about the objective of the meeting, the summary of WaLETS results and the basis of choosing the invitees to that meeting. She took the opportunity to request all

Burundi leaders in government, NGOs, Private sector, farmer association, research institutions to include WaLETS results in their programs and policies in order to achieve the food and nutrition security as well as gender equity.