

## WaLETS Results Dissemination in Uganda on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2016



Figure 1: Group photo of participants WaLETS Results dissemination in Uganda

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.

On 1<sup>st</sup> November 2016, a half day workshop was held at Silver Spring Hotel to disseminate WaLETS findings to Uganda stakeholders.



Figure 3: Dr Birungi opening the workshop

In her opening remarks, Dr Birungi Korutaro, the WaLETS project team leader, informed participants about what Kilimo Trust does and the genesis of the WaLETS project. She explained that the East African Common

Market (EACM) is not being used effectively to ensure well-functioning regional trade and markets do not provide the right signals with respect to the value of all ecosystem services. As a result, there are 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. She said that WaLETS was designed to address the above challenge, using regional trade as the entry point.



Figure 2: Dr Mudioppe presenting WaLETS results

Dr Joseph Mudioppe, the main speaker of the day presented WaLETS results for the four output:

1. Gaps in Policy
2. Scenarios models
3. Crops suitability map
4. Gender analysis

Following the presentation, participants asked several questions. Some of the questions asked touched on a) why rice, maize and beans were selected as the pilot crops of the research and; and b) the methodology used to develop the suitability maps. In answering the questions, Dr. Mudioppe related the importance of these crops in the EAC in influencing food security, ecosystem management as well as gender and trade. A detailed explanation of the methodology used to develop the maps was also provided.

The participants also engaged in a group exercise to identify strategies and methods of disseminating the WaLETS generated evidence.

**Government officials** suggested among other things the development of a food and ecosystem policy that would address and incentivizing environmental actors through tax waivers, subsidies and pricing.

**Some of the recommendations from the Private sector** were stakeholder awareness campaigns to emphasize the economic benefits (Monetary value) of ensuring sustainable ecosystem use.

**The NGOs and BDSs recommended** the formation and strengthening of environmental clubs for youth and women - to increase awareness on sustainable ecosystem management

**While the youth and women** group emphasized the



Figure 4: Mrs. Kaaya Christine presenting discussion results for youth and women group

need to conduct sensitivity analysis of gender and ecosystem

management

before any intervention. They also mentioned the involvement of men in capacity building about the potential of women and youth in food production and trade for improved livelihood of their households.

**The group consisting of universities and researchers** stressed the importance of involving the youth and women in all stages of research. They also suggested the need to develop technologies that are ecosystem user friendly such as breeding varieties that have high water use efficiency.

Participants were asked to describe their leaning experience from the presentation made.

**One thing I learnt from the presentation is:** that it is



Figure 6: Ms. Magdalene Amujal Head of Programs Kulika, Uganda

profitable to be able to put resources to produce a particular crop in the ecosystem that supports it (highly suitable) rather than trying it in a less suitable agro ecology.

The one question that I still have is; when I am talking to farmers in the areas

of high suitability, is it right to say that all

crop varieties are suitable? Or is suitability affected by the variety? The other issue that is still unclear is that apart from land, water & biodiversity, will reducing reliance on off-farm, external, and non-renewable inputs help in increasing suitability of an ecosystem, or can an ecosystem be rejuvenated? Can the system be self-regulating when a few suitable crops are grown? Will it not cause the breakdown of the system somewhere causing it to become unsuitable for that crop?

**One thing I learnt from the presentation:** The



Figure 5: Mr Charles Mugoya, Monitoring and Evaluation Manager of Technoserve Uganda

suitability maps presented are very informative and awakening. We should always have this in mind before designing agricultural projects as this will definitely save on the ecosystem resources. But the project needs to broaden the geographical area

and include all the agro ecological zones so that we know which crop to promote in which area.

**I still did not get concrete reasons from the WaLETS findings** as to why for all this long, women are still marginalized and yet lots of organizations have been working towards this endeavor. This has not clearly come out and we still need further investigation to understand why the gender status quo is still the same. That will enable us to develop appropriate recommendations.