

AFRICA 2000 NETWORK-UGANDA

BUILDING ON LOCAL INNOVATION



Experiences in Farmer-Led Documentation By farmers from Kabale –Uganda



1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 AFRICA 2000 NETWORK-UGANDA

Africa 2000 Network-Uganda (A2N) is a Non-Governmental Organization which has been operational in Uganda since 1990. The A2N vision is “improved and sustainable livelihoods for the smallholder farmer”. The Mission of the organization is “to alleviate poverty by supporting smallholder farmer groups to undertake initiatives geared towards livelihood improvement and natural resources regeneration and conservation”.

A2N operates in 11 districts of Uganda with projects ranging from capacity building for farmer groups to those that support them with low-cost agricultural inputs all aimed at tackling rural poverty.

1.2 Background to Farmer led Documentation

Over the years, Africa 2000 Network has interacted with farming communities with varied information, knowledge, skills and experiences which have either been documented in reports or in publications that may not be within reach of ordinary farmers. Even when they are accessible the farmers are quite often used to provide vital information thus rendering them mere “actors” rather than “doers” during the documentation process. This way the information ends up being distorted in the interest of time, space or the personal interests of the authors. Thus sometimes missing the gist of the core messages.

It is against this background that Africa 2000 Network-Uganda in collaboration with PELUM-Uganda and Prolinnova-Uganda, with support from Oxfam Novib organized a workshop in Kampala (Uganda) in November 2006 aimed at promoting the efforts to take lead in documenting their experiences. It is this initiative that is known as “Farmer – Led Documentation (FLD)”. During this workshop with grass root communities were introduced to the FLD concept and how it can be mainstreamed in their activities. Farmer-led documentation is an emerging and empowering process in which the local communities take the lead in the documentation process and where results are used by the community members for internal learning, and agents and policy makers”. This process helps to empower the participating communities to document their good practices to make themselves visible to the outside World.

One of the outcomes of the Kampala workshop was that participating organizations committed themselves to go out and try out some of the ideas generated during their one-week interaction in order to further share their experiences later. In Uganda, Africa 2000 Network-Uganda selected Kabale as one of their FLD pilot sites. This report therefore is a summary of their experiences working with grassroots communities to introduce the FLD concept. Kabale District is located in South-Western part of Uganda.

2.0 SCOOPING

2.1 Selecting lead actors

Africa 2000 Network-Uganda is implementing a livelihood improvement project in Kabale known as “Strengthening Farmers Association for Poverty Eradication (SFAPE)”. The project targets groups and associations by supporting their ability to improve their food security and incomes, but also to groom a cadre of community-based farmer trainers who can sustain these efforts. A2N also maintains a number of libraries in the communities. Over the years these farmer trainers have demonstrated that they can become change agents in the communities where they live and work. They therefore formed themselves into a network on a farmer trainer’s known as “Kabale Farmer Trainers Networking Association, (KAFNA).” With representation from the groups and association, KAFNA strives to advocate for the interests of smallholder farmers and has become a household name. KAFNA has a vibrant executive committee and publishes a newsletter in the local language. It is against this background that A2N identified KAFNA as a key actor in the farmer-led documentation process.

3.0 STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP

3.1 Selecting Innovators

Building on the efforts and structures of KAFNA a one-day sensitization workshop was held to introduce the concept of farmer-led documentation and to share documentation experiences. Participants were drawn from the groups and associations working in the A2N areas of operation. KAFNA assisted in identifying farmers who had already expressed interest in documenting their experiences through their local newsletter and other media. They also invited those active farmers who had come up with interesting innovations that could be used as case studies in the FLD process.

3.2 Objectives of Workshop

The main objective of the stakeholders’ workshop was to bring together a cross-section of farmers and development practitioners to share their documentation experiences. The specific objectives of the workshop were:

- To introduce the FLD concept to participants
- To develop a common understanding of FLD
- To share experiences in documentation of local innovations
- To find practical ways of taking on FLD

3.3 Expected outputs

Participants with a common understanding of FLD concept
A cadre of farmer innovators able to document their experiences
A profile of lead farmer innovators

3.4 Workshop Programme

The following table shows the programme for the workshop

Time	Activity	Lead Person(s)
8:00 – 9:00 am	Registration	Beatrice/Bakama
9:00 – 9:45 am	Introductions Expectation Objectives Outputs	Beatrice/ Jimmy
9:45 – 10:00 am	Official opening	Alex/Chief Guest
10:00 - 11:00 am	Introduction to FLD	Jimmy
11:00 - 11:30 am	Tea Break	Ernst/ Beatrice
11:30 – 12:00 pm	FLD Case Studies	Jimmy
12:00 – 1:00 pm	Group Work (Farmer experience)	Beatrice/ Jimmy
1:00 – 2:00 pm	Lunch Break	Beatrice / Ernst
2:00 – 3:00 pm	Farmer experiences in FLD (Plenary)	Beatrice
3:00 -3:30 pm	Documentation	Ernst/ Jimmy
3:30 – 4:00 pm	FLD Field Sites	Jimmy/ Beatrice
4:00 – 4:10 pm	Wrap up / Way forward Departure	Beatrice



Participants at the FLD sensitization workshop

3.5 Workshop outcome

Participants who were drawn from different parts of the district were very enthusiastic with farmer-led documentation practice after sharing the different methods that can be used to document farmer experiences.

The following highlights characterized the workshop deliberations:

3.5.1 Stories

Farmers when given opportunity were able to tell stories about the different things they were doing in heir homes for survival and to get income. Each person was given 5

minutes to share with participants one unique activity being done and to vividly describe it in order to create imagery that could provoke a visit.

3.5.2 Innovations:

The sharing session revealed the following innovations on the farmers of participants:

- Use of various forms of liquid manure ranging from animal, plant, to human waste
- Use of chicken droppings to feed cows and dried cow dung to feed chicken.
- Use of diluted cow milk to treat fungal diseases on plant e.g apples
- Raising tree seedlings in portable nursery made out of cans
- Various storage methods using local shrubs e.g Artemisia
- Using tephrosia leaves as acaricide
- Local methods of raising bees

The most interesting aspect was the farmers' explanations given on some aspects of farmer behaviours and why they have resisted on some technologies. A very good example cited was the rejection of modern beehives in preference to locally-made hives which according to them produce more honey. Farmers also contested that they would not tell such stories to scientists as they come to them preaching ready-made theories and solutions to many of the problems.

3.5.3 Local ways of documenting experiences

The following ways of documentation by farmers were identified:

- Dram/music (Enanga)
- Dance
- Photograph/Baptism cards
- Name of persons /animals/places
- Tying knots to depict calendar years
- Stories
- Visitors books (recent)
- Birth certificates (recent)/mandatory registration

4:0 FLD FIELD SITES

The excitement from the stories provoked participants to request to visit their colleagues in order to satisfy the curiosity generated. In order to manage this excitement criteria was set to be used to select sites to be visited for FLD field practice. In a participatory manner the following criteria was adopted to select field practice sites.

- Farmers with more than one innovation
- Accessibility of site
- Gender balance
- Farmer's communication skills
- Participation in the workshop

He places to be visited for field practice were selected using this criteria. Participants therefore zeroed on the following sites:

- Kyantobi in Bubare sub-county (Mrs Evelyne Tibemanya)
- Karukara in Hamurwa (Mrs Fidelis Karugaba)
- Muyumbu in Kyanamira (Mr. Kahindi Semu)
- Nyabikoni in Kabale Municipality (Mrs Beatrice Twayaga)

4.1 FLD Lead Facilitators

After setting the ground for FLD field practice a team of farmers was selected to lead the process. This process was even more complicated than the selection of field practice sites. As before the facilitator guided the participants to design a criteria which helped to resolve the conflict as each person wanted to go to the field. He following criteria was used:

- Communication skills especially writing
- Proven interest in sustainable agriculture
- Willing to volunteer time and resources
- Physically-fit (able to walk long distance)
- Interest to participate and sustain efforts

The following were therefore selected against this criteria:

Name	Sub-county
1. Kahindi Semu	Kyanamira Sub-county
2. Beitwenda Evas	Kyanamira “
3. Turyatempa Henry	Bubare
4. Nyabirano Beatrice	Bubare
5. Tumwebaze Emmanuel	Bubare
6. Tumushange Loyda	Rwamucucu
7. Bakama Jonathan	Hamurwa
8. Twayaga Beatrice	Kabale Municipality (KAFNA)

A date was fixed when the first field practice would take place. Participants included KAFNA members on the FLD field practice as a way of keeping the FLD candle burning beyond the pilot.

5.0 FLD LEAD TEAM

5.1 Training programme

Among the recommendations made during the stakeholders’ workshop was the need to conduct a series of field practice sessions in the community but also to specific training in the use of some of the tools to be used. The training programme for the FLD lead team was therefore planned as follows:

- One-day training in the use of basic tools to be used during FLD field practice e.g digital camera, video camera etc

- 2-day hands-on field practice at the selected sites
- Two days of compilation of the results from the field practice
- One day of sharing the results with stakeholders and receiving feedback
- One day of refining the results and input of feedback from stakeholders.

5.2 Training in use of tools

A one-day session was held to teach the FLD lead team the use of the video camera and also the digital camera as these were the only tools available to them. At first some of the team members were timid as they had never touched a camera in their lives and looked at it as something very delicate. However they later gained confidence as they were given opportunity to open and close the equipment several times during the practical demonstration sessions. The fear disappeared completely when they went to the field. During this session guidance was also given on other methods of documentation like note taking, interviews and observation.

5.3 Field practice sessions

Because the field sessions were for apart and the team needed to spend time at each site to satisfy their curiosity, the field practice sessions lasted 2 days. An idea to work in two groups failed to work out due to limited cameras. The spent at least here hours at each of the selected site listening to stories, asking questions and recording some very interesting scenes.



FLD lead team during the field practice



Farmers were able to overcome their fears by practicing the use of video cameras

5.4 Lessons from the field practice

- Farmer to farmer learning is a very exciting experience
- The host farmers are motivated to participate because their knowledge and views are respected and valued
- A lot of untold stories are recorded while new farmer innovations are unraveled in the process. Farmers are always experimenting and conducting research whose findings never find their way in any document.
- FLD revealed that research gaps can be identified through such processes. Farmers practices and beliefs can also be validated and improved on through giving scientific explanations thus blending indigenous with scientific knowledge. For example the

farmer who uses milk to spray apples treat blight it works needs to be backed up with scientific explanation.

- Genuine gender representation is key in this process.

5.5 Challenges

It must also be said through that in spite of the many positive results from the FLD field practice. Some difficulties were also encountered. A few that can be mentioned here include:

- Adequate time and resources are needed to prepare the farmers for them to take on the FLD practice on their own.
- Farmers need to have their own equipment for them to own the process. In this particular case Kabale Farmer Trainers Networking Association (KAFNA) would be in position to own and maintain the equipment.
- The oral documentation culture resident in most cultures needs to be nurtured into a writing culture to enable information and knowledge sharing.
- Need to structure sustainability mechanisms in early stages.

6.0 FLD WORKSHOP FOR SHARING RESULTS

6.1 Objectives:

A one-day workshop was held aimed at sharing the results of the field practice. The following were the specific objectives of this workshop:

- To share results from the FLD field practice
- To get feedback from the field practice
- To reinforce knowledge and skills acquired from the FLD initiatives
- To share experiences with counterparts through the participatory video taken in Kisoro
- To draw lessons and forge a way forward

6.2 Results from Field Practice

Farmers made a presentation on what went well and what didn't go well.

(a) What was good from FLD Practice/Process?

- The host farmers readily accepted the FLD team and shared their experiences
- Many farmer innovations found out there surprised the team
- Farmer to farmer learning was found to be an effective way of sharing knowledge and skills
- Hands-on practice by FLD team was very motivating
- Many of the innovations seen can be replicated by others e.g use of liquid manure.
- Farmers receptive to new ideas like FLD

(b) What was not done well?

- Some farmers withheld some vital information especially advocacy issues

- Team members lacked adequate skills in handling the FLD tools e.g video camera
- More time was needed for preparation for field practice
- There were too many questions asked by FLD team members which showed lack of coordination
- The story didn't come out clearly in some cases.

(c) Tangible results

- The FLD team were able to produce a video tapes record of their field practice which can be edited with good results. The tape was viewed by participants who were impressed with the innovations in the places visited. Feedback was also given how to improve the final product.
- The FLD team members produced articles about their experiences during the FLD practice. A small team was selected to edit the good ones for publication. The articles were all produced in the local language except two which were in English.
- Some of the articles to be published in the KAFNA newsletter to appear in December 2007 (FLD special).



Mr Twayaga Faustino reading his article to participants



Participants watching the Batwa Participatory video to demonstrate the power of FLD

7.0 WHAT LESSONS HAVE WE LEANT?(Plenary)

- FLD trains farmers to observe with a purpose and to share “small” innovations with others. Many times small things turn out to be “big” innovations (the use of tephrozia to treat pigs).
- FLD creates confidence among farmers especially when the things they do are appreciated and emulated by other.
- FLD is an empowering practice. The fact that poor rural farmers can also document their experiences using modern technology is a source of motivation.
- Many farmers’ innovations out there have escaped the eye of documentation officers, FLD is the only way.
- Farmers need ICT skills more than anyone else in order to take charge of their own destiny.
- Sharing FLD outcomes with others can go a long way in improving people’s livelihoods.

- FLD an empowering process for women (50% of the participants in the pilot were women).
- FLD results can be used for advocacy and can accelerate desired change.



Mrs Beatrice Ngabairano firmly holding the video camera during the field practice

TESTIMONY

“I have never seen an African woman holding a camera because this business is for men”. This is why I feared to hold it at first. But now that we have been empowered to take the lead in documenting our experiences through Farmer-led documentation nobody is going to intimidate me again. We have been marginalized for a long time and now enough is enough! Long live A2n, long live PELUM.

Beatrice Ngabairano, Chairperson, Nyamiyaga Fruit Growers Association

8.0 WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES?

- Lack of writing skills proved to be a big constraint on the part of FLD team. There is therefore need to enhance writing skills of farmers. (KAFNA could take the lead in this).
- More training/exposure is still needed in the use of ICT equipment needed during FLD practice.
- Women need to come out and take the lead as they play a big role in sustainable development. At first women were too “timid” to handle video cameras, but after overcoming this artificial fear, did wonders!
- Documentation of FLD results is challenging.

9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is need to bring more farmers on board the FLD practice especially women.
- More follow-up training for FLD team to sustain effort (KAFNA to continue)
- KAFNA would like support to purchase own camera to continue process.
- A workshop on writing skills and desktop publishing recommended for FLD team (KAFNA) to take lead.

ANNEX I

PARTICIPATORY VIDEO; CASE STUDY

A video recording on the plight of the Batwa in South-western Uganda was used as part of the FLD learning process. The Batwa are a marginalized landless people who were chased from the forest where they derived their livelihood, and now roam the villages adjacent the forest.

The video recording depicts the situation of hopelessness, powerlessness, and through participatory video, they (Batwa) take a central role and speak out loud and clear how they have been marginalized by the government and other development agencies, thus clearly bringing out the advocacy message.

LESSONS (Plenary)

- Video is an effective tool for advocacy which the farmers can take advantage of to put up their case.
- Video can be used to promote technologies and innovations that enhance livelihoods improvement.
- It can be used to fight injustice and oppression.
- It can be used for resource mobilization.
- Depicts the power of collective effort.
- A case for improved service delivery.
- A weapon to promote human rights and good governance.

ANNEX II

ACTION PLAN

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	COLLABORATIONS	RESPONSIBLE	TIME FRAME
1- To disseminate workshop outputs and create awareness about FLD among KAFNA and community members.	-Organize and publish FLD results in the KAFNA “Agabahingi” .	- A2N - Kabale District LG(NAADS)	- KAFNA executive - KAFNA VSO volunteer.	Nov-Dec 2007
	-Conduct a one day workshop on FLD practice for KAFNA members	- A2N - PELUM - Prolinnova	- KAFNA executive	Jan-Feb 2008
2- To promote and sustain FLD practice among KAFNA members and partners	- Publish one brochure on FLD with photos and circulate it to KAFNA members and partners.	- A2N - Kabale District LG (NAADS).	- KAFNA executive. -VSO volunteer.	Jan-Feb 2008
	- Share the FLD documentary with partners. - Conduct fundraising for purchase of 1 Video recorder,1 computer and printer	- A2N. - PELUM. - Prolinnova	- KAFNA executive - VSO volunteer	Jan-Dec 2008

ANNEX III
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS IN FLD WORKSHOPS

NO.	NAME	NAME OF SUBCOUNTY	ADDRESS(CONTACT)
1	Asiimwe David	Maziba	048626266
2	Kyoshabire Florence	Maziba	
3	Beitwenda Evas	Kyanamira	0772530223
4	Kahindi Semu	Kyanamira	0712930874
5	Rwamahe Keith	Kyanamira	
6	Ngabirano Beatrice	Bubare	
7	Tibemanya Evelynna	Bubare	
8	Tumwebaze Emmanuel	Bubare	0772557418
9	Ekibikirekwa John	Bubare	
10	Turyatamba Henry	Bubare	0752846334
11	Mpirirwe Jane	Bubare	
12	Ngabirano Ambrose	Bubare	
13	Bitarabehe Joseline	Bubare	
14	Bakama Jonathan	Hamurwa	0772846708
15	Kalimunda Paul	Hamurwa	0782875558
16	Karugaba Fidelis	Hamurwa	
17	Buhazi Christopher	Hamurwa	
18	Turyagyenda Esau	Rwamucucu	
19	Azimazire Amos	Rwamucucu	
20	Tumushange Loydah	Rwamucucu	
21	Byecwamu John	Rwamucucu	
22	Bazirakye Louis	Southern Division	0772601255
23	Barugahare Melony	Southern Division	
24	Nsaba Peter	Central Division	
25	Twayaga Beatrice	Central Division	0772340903
26	Akankwasa Charles	Northern Division	0772996988
27	Surjya Kumar Dash	KAFNA (VSO)	