



FLD FOLLOW UP EVALUATION REPORT



A farmers' community library

PHASE 1 PILOT PROJECT

IMPLEMENTED BY: AFRICA 2000 NETWORK -KABALE

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DECEMBER, 2008

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LIST OF ACCRONYMS

A2N	Africa 2000 Network
FLD	Farmers Led Documentation
KAFNA	Kabale Farmers Trainers Network
LIF	Local Information Facilitators
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MP	Member of Parliament
NRM	Natural Resource Management
PELUM	Participatory ecological Land Use Management
PROLINNOVA	Promoting Local Innovations
REN	Rural Empowerment Network
SFAPE	Strengthening Farmers Associations for Poverty Reduction
SA	Sustainable Agriculture
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

1.0 BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In 2006, Oxfam Novib, Promoting Local Innovation (PROLINNOVA) and Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) - Uganda formed a partnership to promote farmer led documentation for sustainable agriculture and natural resource management. “Farmer-Led documentation” is an empowering process in which local communities take the lead role in the documentation process and where results are used by community members for purposes of internal learning (within the community) and exchange between communities (horizontal sharing) and communities development agents and policy maker (vertical). These documentation and knowledge sharing processes assist in making relevant experiences and good practices at community level visible as a starting point for further Farmer-led agricultural development.

Three (3) organizations from Uganda and South Africa were also selected by the FLD steering group and supported to pilot FLD. These were Rural Empowerment Network (REN) in Uganda which piloted the question and answer service voucher system, Africa 2000 Network in Uganda which piloted FLD using digital and video cameras and the Farmer Support Group in South Africa that piloted FLD using still photography.

The first phase has successfully brought many stakeholders on board and the approach has been successfully piloted, there is need to build on the available literature on FLD to include details on how the pilots were conducted as well as subsequent integration of FLD among member and partner organizations.

Such documentation would greatly enhance understanding of FLD in practice as well as how development practitioners can integrate it in their programs.

1.2 Introduction

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.

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.

In an FLD international workshop organized in 2006 in which A2N took part, participating organizations committed themselves to go out and try out some of the ideas generated during their one week interaction. In addition, Africa 2000 Network-Uganda was selected to pilot FLD in Kabale where Kabale Farmers Trainers Network (KAFNA), a partner of A2N was identified to implement the pilot.

Kabale Farmers Networking Association (KAFNA) was formed in 2004/5 by smallholder farmer groups and families, which were working with Africa 2000 Network - Kabale under a project called; Strengthening Farmers Associations for Poverty Eradication (SFAPE). KAFNA is comprised of 8 farmer groups and an overall total 270 registered members with 50% gender balance. The main goal of the Association is; to create a strong umbrella organization through which the voices of smallholder farmers could be heard. The vision is; to improve the welfare of its members through collective

action”. A2N identified KAFNA as a key actor in FLD due to their past experiences in documentation and project work.

The FLD pilot project was conducted between April to August 2007. 8 farmer groups were involved in the project from 4 sub counties; Kyanamira Sub-county, Bubare, Rwamucucu and Kabale Municipality. The pilot involved training of selected farmers in using of the video and digital cameras. Guidance was also given on other methods of documentation like note taking, interviews and observation. Farmers who were directly trained were tasked with the responsibility of training their fellow farmers in their respective farmer groups/ communities on how to document their farming experiences using video and still digital cameras. The pilot project was also an attempt to integrate FLD in activities of A2N.

2.0 FOLLOW UP EVALUATION

Phase1 of FLD was successfully piloted and a lot of useful information and experiences were generated which would greatly enhance our understanding of FLD as well generate lessons to guide the implementation of phase 2 pilots which are already underway .

Between the 2nd and 3rd of December 2008, a follow up evaluation was successfully conducted on the pilot project implemented by A2N Kabale with farmers of KAFNA using video and digital cameras.

The objectives of the follow up evaluation were ;

- To assess the uptake of the FLD approach by the farmers/ farmer groups involved in the FLD pilots.
- To assess the uptake of FLD by the organizations that have piloted it
- To develop an e-publication on FLD pilots and integration of the approach.

Methodology

Activities involved in the follow up evaluation include d; Focus group discussions guided by the discussion checklist with Farmer leaders from the different farmer groups that participated in the FLD pilot and the Local Information Facilitators (LIFs), Field visits to the Community Information Centers. One on one interviews were also held with different

FLD practitioners and these include; Jimmy Musiime, A2N -kabale project assistant, Ritah Lumala, A2N secretariat programme officer and Mrs. Tibamanya Evelyn, a reknown farmer innovator and FLD practitioner, review of documents for instance the progress report as well as recordings of results was also done.

A total of 14 farmer representatives from three farmer groups took part in the evaluation with a representation of 5 women and 9 men. A discussion was also held with the implementing organization to share the integration of FLD in their activities, successes, challenges and lessons learnt for better integration of FLD. This report therefore presents the findings of the follow up evaluation exercise.



Plate 1: farmers taking part in the focus group discussion

3.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE FLD PILOT

The FLD pilot project was conducted in Kabale district with farmers of KAFNA farmer group. The project had a duration of five months and piloted the use of digital and video cameras to empower farmers to take the lead in documenting their experiences. The project was farmer led and A2N-Kabale offered technical support since the technology used was relatively new to farmers.

Farmers were able to experiment and derive their own lessons which they shared with fellow farmers under already set up platforms like community libraries which are accessible to all farmers in the community.

The pilot project was a farmer empowerment process as well as a learning process for development practitioners on the best methodologies that can bring more farmers to pick an interest in documenting their experiences.

A lead team was selected from a cross section of active groups who subscribe to Kabale Farmers Networking (KAFNA with 50% women representation). A selection criterion was developed by the KAFNA executive members in collaboration with farmer groups to identify the lead team which resulted into a manageable number of 8 farmers (4men and Women respectively) to lead the documentation process.

3.1 Methodology Used during the pilot

The FLD methodology piloted was; use of **still digital and video cameras and use of community libraries**. The pilot had several activities to enable practitioners fully grasp the concept.

A sensitization workshop was organized for A2N - Kabale to introduce the concept of farmer-led documentation and to share documentation experiences. KAFNA assisted in identifying farmers who had already expressed interest in documenting and active farmers who had come up with interesting innovations that could be used as case studies in the FLD process.

A team of 8 farmers selected to lead the FLD process basing on a criteria of communication and writing skills, interest in Sustainable agriculture, Voluntarism and physical fitness. The lead team was later trained in the use of still digital and video cameras since the methodology was relatively new to them. The FLD project provided the Digital and video camera as documentation tools for the farmers. These documentation tools were used to capture agricultural practices and agricultural products which were eventually shared with other community members in the community libraries and with community leaders to expose the challenges that are encountered by the farmers.

Field visits were organized for the lead team to get hands on experience on practical application of the methodology. The selection of field visits was participatory and as part of the criteria, farmers to be visited had to be local innovators to provide case studies to other farmers, easily accessible and a consideration of the gender aspect. Several lessons

and challenges were generated from the field which ought to be shared with other farmers.

A workshop was organized for sharing results generated results from the field and get feedback.

4.0 DISCUSSION WITH IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATION

A discussion was held with staff members of Africa2000 network who were directly involved in the FLD pilot project during the evaluation process. The discussion was guided by the checklist (see appendix). Several issues came up from the discussion and these included; integration of FLD in A2N activities, successes, challenges encountered and lessons learnt on how FLD can be best put into practice.



Plate 2: Jimmy Musime of A2N Kabale showing some work done on documentation

4.1 Integration of FLD in programmes of A2N- Kabale

A2N mobilized farmers (5 women and 10 men) to volunteer as Local Information Facilitators (LIFs) in the making and designing of community information data systems in a livelihood improvement project in Kabale known as “Strengthening Farmers Association for Poverty Eradication (SFAPE). LIFs document proceedings from farmers’ focus group meetings that discuss Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and progress made by Uganda and Kabale district in particular is working towards them. The issues that arise are forwarded to the sub county to lobby and advocate for and a conducive environment for better attainment of the MDGs. The project is implemented in Hamura Sub County and currently exists in 6 out of the 15 parishes within the said sub county.

A2N Kabale has operationalized community libraries for farmers to store and access information generated in the FLD pilot. Community libraries are conveniently located and easily accessible to farmers. Farmers borrow materials from the library for reference purposes at no cost and a visitor's book is provided to keep record of the borrowings and visits.



Plate 3: A community library in Hamura Sub County

A local Newsletter entitled, “**AGABAHINGI**” was published by KAFNA and 2 issues of the Newsletter were produced. The editorial team is comprised of A2N staff and KAFNA farmer leaders. Several articles by farmers have been published in the Newsletter in their local language which is understandable to majority of the farmers. However, the publication has been temporarily stopped due to shortage of funds, fundraising for the publication is in progress. This shows how farmers value information and documentation.

4.2 What Worked Well

Organizing farmer to farmer exchange visits during the FLD pilot inspired trust, confidence, determination and a sense of ownership among farmers. Seeing fellow farmers firmly holding the cameras and in control of the whole documentation process made other farmers who visited feel that they can also ably take the lead in documenting their experiences even with advanced technologies like digital cameras. Also, farmers were able to open up to fellow farmers and easily shared their experiences.

Encouraging farmers to write articles on the experiences generated from the FLD pilot project which were published in their local newsletter, “ **Agabahiingi**” literally meaning, **stories of farmers**. This enabled wider sharing of FLD in communities that did not take part in the pilot project and increased the possibility of possible replication of the methodology.

A2N also published an FLD article in their e – newsletter called Tumaini. This newsletter is widely shared with the 10 A2N member countries as well as several other A2N partners

4.3 What did not Work Well

Majority of the farmers who took part in the pilot had never used the still and video digital cameras before which made it quite a task to select and train farmers in using the new technology. Worse still was the limited availability of the cameras, only one video and one still digital camera were available for the project yet ample time was needed to train each farmer on practical application of these gadgets and provide the required outcome within a project period of 5 months as required. However, selection of a manageable number of 8 to be trained as experts to lead the project team was a well thought t move in addressing the above challenge.

5.0 Case Study of a Farmer Practicing FLD

Mrs. Tibimanya Evelyn, a small scale farmer who is a member of Kyantobi Agro-forestry association and a renowned farmer innovator shared her experiences from practicing FLD. She was one of the lucky farmers who were selectively trained to lead the FLD team in the pilot. As an innovator, she was able to document about her local innovations in a brochure clearly stating the different steps and materials used in her innovation of using thephrosia as a pesticide against bean weevils.



Plate 4: Mrs. Evelyn Tibamanya during the Evaluation

Mrs. Evelyn uses the skills acquired in the FLD pilot project to document and keep records on her income and expenditure of the farm production as well as the production cycles. She alleged that, she has been subconsciously practicing FLD during the 1990s until the FLD pilot project which opened her eyes to realize the true importance of FLD and the different methodologies that can be used to achieve the desired results.

She advised that for a successful documentation, a farmer has to choose a clear subject to document, know the objectives for his/ her documentation (what they want to achieve) and the people who would like to share your experiences / best practices (audience). She also noted that, information and documentation is vital in promoting Sustainable Agriculture (SA) and Natural Resource Management (NRM).

Mrs. Tibamanya hosts a community information center which she uses for displaying/ keeping the archives that she has generated over time as a farmer and a local innovator . She has been using this center as a learning center for other farmers which earn her some extra income to supplement her daily earnings as a small scale farmer.

She also charges Uganda shillings 20,000/= (approximately US\$) per learning tour in her farm in order to learn her good practices of farming through her documentation. Her community library contains the following items;

- Photographs that she has been taking with her personal camera while farming, showing farming methods, best practices, challenges, innovations and successes.
- Posters that she produced with the help of A2N showing her farming methods.
- Brochures.(Development partners like PROLINNOVA Uganda helped her in coming up with a brochure on her innovation)
- Resource maps

5.1 FLD as an advocacy tool, a case of participatory video by farmers in Kisoro district as told by Ritah Lumala (Program officer Africa2000Network Secretariat)

Farmers in Kisoro district told stories of their lives through a **participatory video**. These farmers are part of the marginalized Batwa communities in South western Uganda. The video showcased how they were being marginalized in different aspects of life. After completion of the video, a workshop was organized where the video was viewed by the participants among whom was, the honorable Member of Parliament (MP) for Kisoro district. He picked interest in the video and the stories told on the marginalization of these communities and was prompted to take action.

The MP took a copy of the video for viewing in one on the national level parliamentary sessions. Members of parliament were so touched that a solution to the marginalization of the Batwa tribe in Kisoro district was discussed. As an outcome, agricultural extension support was extended to Kisoro District which was not the case before and other forms of assistance in basic care needs like clothing and construction materials were also sent to these marginalized groups in Kisoro .

This case study presents a lifetime experience on how great farmers can benefit by documenting their experiences and using the right medium to present them to the right people. Perhaps, FLD could be the right channel to reverse the trends of farmers' problems that everyone keeps a deaf ear to or perhaps when they try to respond, the intervention does not answer the needs of farmers because there is no appropriate farmer documentation to follow.

6.0 Lessons learnt During the FLD pilot

- Farmer led documentation enhances information/knowledge sharing/cross learning.
- Increases participation and social inclusion/gender responsive.
- Farmers can express themselves in their own words more explicit without the middle man.
- Farmer led documentation enhances preservation of indigenous knowledge among the farmers.
- FLD products can be used for advocacy.
- Promotes unity among small holder farmers through the sharing of information and knowledge.

7.0 Challenges encountered during the implementation of Pilot

- i. There is a very slow pace in replication of FLD practices that were piloted.
- ii. Not enough feed back to farmers on the photos taken.
- iii. Cameras were few and new to farmers yet limited time was given for the pilot
- iv. Financial constraint especially when it came to printing of the photos and producing videos.
- v. The farmers are not aware of the many different ways in which the documentation would help them especially during advocacy .
- vi. The culture of documentation is still not common with small scale farmers.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

8.1 Conclusion

The follow up evaluation revealed that, the pilot project was able to achieve quite a recommendable success in meeting its set objectives. The pilot was able to open the eyes of farmers on farmer led documentation and how they can benefit by taking up the process.

Farmers were able to learn that several methodologies can be used to document to make the process more exciting to farmers and adoptable to those who can not read and write, for example by using photos and videos.

We must however appreciate that FLD is still new among many small scale farmers and others practice it subconsciously. Therefore, enough time, support and effort must be given for FLD to be grasped by the farmers.

FLD is a process and its benefits cannot be realized overnight which has to be understood by farmers who are used to assistance in form of tangible material/ inputs to transform their lives.

It is therefore our duty as development practitioners and stakeholders in FLD to carry on with what has been started as well as learn from the pilots on how best FLD can be incorporated among farmers as well as clearly linking it to farmers livelihoods.

8.2 Recommendations

- 1) There is need for more capacity building of farmers on the different methodologies of FLD so that they can make the right choices to document their experiences.
- 2) FLD needs to be incorporated in farmer led advocacy strategies for successful lobbying.
- 3) Development practitioners should put in place mechanisms of incorporating FLD in their activities especially those targeting farmers.
- 4) Farmers need to be involved in the planning process of FLD projects so that they can feel part of the project which creates a sense of ownership
- 5) More pilots need to be conducted to determine the most suitable methodologies of FLD to enable quick learning, stimulate interest of farmers, use locally available materials to ensure sustainability of FLD
- 6) Issue of gender balance needs to be put into consideration right at the time of planning putting into consideration the different role of both sexes in farming.
- 7) More time and resources should be allocated to FLD pilots given the fact that it's new to farmers and requires ample time to fully grasp.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: List of participants in the Focus group discussions on FLD

	NAME	PARISH	SEX	FARMER GROUP
1.	Arinaitwe Scovia	Shebeya	F	LIF/A2N
2.	Turyahikayo Vincent	Mpungu	M	LIF/ A2N
3.	Byarugaba Edward	Mpungu	M	LIF/A2N
4.	Atwongyere Susan	Ingomanda	F	LIF/A2N
5.	Katambira	Hamurwa	M	LIF/A2N
6.	Akankwasa Dionogo	Shebeya	M	LIF/A2N
7.	Byaruhanga Kenneth	Ruhonwa	M	LIF/A2N
8.	Tibemanya Everlyn	Butobore	F	Farmer/Innovator
9.	Hajji Yusuf Byekwaso	K.M.C	M	Farmer/KAFNA
10.	Tumwebaze Emanuel	Nyamiyaga	M	FLD team member and farmer
11.	Ngabirano Beatrice	Nyamiyaga	F	FLD team member and farmer.
12.	Twayaga Beatrice	K.M.C	F	FLD team member and farmer.
13.	Byarugaba Onesmus	Kabale	M	A2N
14.	Jimmy Musiime	Kabale	M	Project coordinator

Appendix 2: Focus group discussion checklist

A: For farmer groups

1. Names of farmer groups involved in the pilot
2. Number of farmers involved (how many men and women?)
3. Areas of implementation. (How many sub counties or villages or districts?)
4. FLD methodology used?
5. Lessons learnt from the FLD pilot with regard to
 - How FLD can best be put in practice
 - Its contribution to promoting SA/NRM
 - Do farmers value knowledge/ documentation?
 - Are farmers well able to take the lead in documentation?
 - Sustainability
6. Challenges encountered during the implementation
7. Any replication of the FLD practices to other communities? If so how many more communities/ farmer groups/ farmers?
8. What are the ongoing activities or programs that have adopted FLD using the above methodology?
9. Are there any other FLD methodologies introduced since the pilot ended? If so, which ones?

B: For development practitioners

10. How have you integrated FLD in your programs?
11. What has worked well?
12. What has not worked?
13. Share a case study
14. Recommendations for better integration