

## **FLD FOLLOW UP EVALUATION REPORT**



### **PHASE ONE PILOT**

**PROJECT: Towards improved farmer participation in documenting  
Agricultural information**

**Implementer: Rural Empowerment Network (REN) – Kayunga**

**Compiled by PELUM UGANDA**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>LIST OF ACCRONYMS .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.0 BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1 Background .....	4
1.2 Introduction .....	4
<b>2.0 Follow Up Evaluation .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3.0 PILOT PROJECT AND THE METHODOLOGY USED .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>4.0 DISCUSSION WITH IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATION .....</b>	<b>7</b>
4.1 Integrating FLD into Programs of REN .....	8
4.2 What Worked Well .....	8
4.3 What did not Work Well .....	9
4.4 Recommendations for Better Integration of FLD .....	9
<b>5.0 FARMER GROUPS INVOLVED IN THE FLD PILOT .....</b>	<b>10</b>
5.1 Busaana Farmers Association .....	10
5.2 Patience Pays Farmers Group .....	10
5.3 Kiwana Rural Development Association .....	11
<b>6.0 OUTCOMES FROM DISCUSSIONS WITH FARMER GROUPS .....</b>	<b>11</b>
6.1 Lessons Learnt from the FLD Pilot .....	11
6.2 How FLD can be best put into practice .....	11
6.3 Contribution of FLD to sustainable agriculture and natural resource management .....	12
6.4 Attaching value to knowledge and documentation .....	13
6.5 Ability of farmers to take the lead in documentation .....	13
6.6 Sustainability of FLD .....	14
6.7 Challenges encountered during the implementation .....	14
6.8 Replication of FLD in other communities .....	15
6.9 Other FLD Methodologies Introduced Since End of Pilot .....	15
<b>7.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>17</b>
7.1 Conclusion .....	17
7.2 Recommendations .....	18
Appendices .....	20
Table of participants in FLD follow up Evaluation .....	20
Discussion checklist/ guiding question .....	21

## **LIST OF ACCRONYMS**

A2N	Africa 2000 Network
CTA	Technical Center for Agriculture and Rural Cooperation
FLD	Farmers Led Documentation
FSG	Farmer Support Group
ISICAD	Information Systems for International Cooperation in Agricultural Research and Rural Development
IRF	Information Request Form
NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory Services
NARO	National Agricultural Advisory Services
NRM	Natural Resource Management
PELUM	Participatory ecological Land Use Management
PROLINNOVA	Promoting Local Innovations
QAS	Question and Answer Service
REN	Rural Empowerment Network
SA	Sustainable Agriculture

## **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 stake holders 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**

Rural Empowerment Network (REN) is a not-for-profit organization that was formed to empower rural communities in Uganda for sustainable development. The organization

implemented a Farmer Led Documentation (FLD) pilot project in Kayunga District with the support of Oxfam Novib, PELUM Association- Uganda, and PROLINNOVA.

The project ran from April 2007 and ended in August 2007. It worked with 60 farmers (14:46 Women and Men respectively) from three farmer groups in Kayunga, namely: Kiwana Rural Development Association, Busaana Farmers Association, and Patience Pays Farmer Group. The FLD project involved the training of farmers in formulating, capturing, and documenting their questions and answers using digital cameras, farmer information request forms and answer sheets. It also mobilized farmer expertise in order to improve the documentation of farmer knowledge for purposes of sharing vital information which would ultimately lead to increased agricultural productivity.

The pilot project also involved the compilation of information archives at each of the project sites for future reference and possible replication. The project was a learning process to inform on the best strategies to involve farmers in active participation of the documentation of their questions and the solutions to these questions.

The implementation of this pilot project gave insights into the different ways that farmers can mobilise, draw, document, and share their local knowledge with other farmers. The project was an attempt at integrating FLD in REN's activities.

## **2.0 Follow Up Evaluation**

Phase 1 of FLD was successfully piloted and a lot of useful information and experiences were generated which would greatly enhance understanding of FLD as well generate lessons to guide the implementation of phase 2 pilots which are already underway given the fact that FLD is relatively a new approach. Between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> of December 2008, a follow up evaluation was successfully conducted on the pilot project implemented by REN with 3 farmer groups in Kayunga district using the Question and Answer Service voucher System (QAS).

**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.

Activities involved in the follow up evaluation were; focus group discussions guided by discussion checklist, field visits, review of document as well as recording of results. A total of 22 farmer representatives from three farmer groups took part in the evaluation and 7 of whom were women. Discussions were 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.



*Plate 2: Farmers of patience pays taking part in focus group discussion*

**3.0 PILOT PROJECT AND THE METHODOLOGY USED**

The pilot project was titled, **towards improved farmer participation in documenting Agricultural information**

**The objectives of the project were;**

- To enhance farmers expertise in the documentation of agricultural information
- To build rural archives at the community level

- To catalyze communication among farmers to encourage farmer to farmer exchange of agricultural information
- To mainstream best practices of FLD into REN's activities .

The methodology used in the pilot project was Question and Answer Service (QAS). Under QAS, farmers were empowered to identify agricultural problems and provide solutions to their problems rather than relying to extension workers who had over time proved to be inefficient. Information Request Forms (IRF) were availed to farmers by REN, expert farmers were identified among the farmer groups who had proven competence in handling specific agricultural problems. Farmers were able to note down their problems on the IRF with a photo to give a visual description of the problem which were then forwarded to expert farmers for answers. A provision for address of farmers and expert farmers was included on the IRF for reference purposes. One copy of the IRF was kept at each of the community libraries for the 3 farmer groups so that other farmers with similar problems are able to access the information to avoid duplication of efforts. Training sessions for each of the three farmer groups were organized to build their capacities in presentations, interviews, recording and use of digital cameras to capture their problems in the gardens and the photographs taken to match the information in the request form.

Expert farmers were identified from the farmer groups by the farmers themselves. These experts were farmers who were capable of providing answers to fellow farmers' agricultural related problems. REN built a database of expert farmers who continued to be consulted in the day-to-day QAS activities of the organization. The list of expert farmers has since grown from 10 to 12 expert farmers, all of them male.

#### **4.0 DISCUSSION WITH IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATION**

A discussion was held with project leaders, Mr. Eria Bwana-Simba and Patrick Kasangaki of REN at their office before visiting the farmers. The discussion was guided by a checklist and several issues came up some of which were already incorporated in their end of project report.

#### **4.1 Integrating FLD into Programs of REN**

REN has developed a database of expert farmers to supplement earlier databases of agricultural experts and extension workers. This was after a realization that farmers are actually capable of taking the lead in documenting and providing solutions to their problems. Expert farmers are more accessible, offer their services at no cost and easily understand situations of fellow farmers since they are farmers themselves.



*Plate 3: Discussion with Patrick, staff member of REN*

REN has modified the question and answer service voucher to incorporate a photo. This has saved farmers the burden of writing their problems and instead express them in form of a photograph and a small description. The innovation also attracted more farmers to document their experiences out of excitement.

#### **4.2 What Worked Well**

REN organized farmer information exchange s for the 3 farmer groups involved in the pilots where different experiences were shared and solutions to challenges were provided since some of the members would have encountered these challenges at one point. This was mostly of an advantage to farmer groups who had few expert farmers and therefore could request for information to their problems from other groups.

### **4.3 What did not Work Well**

Digital cameras were few and inaccessible to many farmers during the pilot. The pilot had only three cameras which were supposed to benefit more than 60 farmers in three farmer groups making it rather difficult. Most if not all of the farmers had never seen or used digital cameras which implies that a lot of time had to be committed to training each farmer on how to use them and take excellent quality photos which clearly depict the agricultural problem they wish to express. Further more, limited accessibility to digital printing services was also a challenge as photos had to be downloaded and taken to Kampala for printing which was rather costly in terms of transportation and time.

REN shared their experience where their farmers requested for an exchange visit with other farmers who had taken part in the FLD pilots using other methodologies so that they could learn more from each other and broaden their understanding of the FLD concept. REN found the suggestion very interesting but found difficulties convincing the farmers that there was not enough money for such an activity despite it being a good idea. The idea also indicated the enthusiasm of farmers to learn more about FLD and spread the practice. Farmers of Kayunga were also excited when they learnt that they were among the few farmer groups who had the opportunity to pilot FLD project, they hoped to be recognized in future and their experiences/ lessons learnt incorporated in the FLD tool kit and other forms of literature when FLD goes to another level.

### **4.4 Recommendations for Better Integration of FLD**

- Farmers need to be sensitized more about FLD since it is a new concept to them, they therefore need to be made aware of how they can benefit in taking the lead in documenting their experiences.
- Partners in FLD need to appreciate more the capabilities of farmers in documentation and empower them to take the lead. There is need for close relationship between partners and farmers.

- Need to introduce promotional materials on FLD and the partners involved so as to build more awareness of the concept for it to sink deeper to farmers.
- Be more keen on gender balance when selecting farmers to take part in FLD activities so as to bring more women on board who are always left out when participation is made open yet they are the ones who spend most of the time in gardens.

## **5.0 FARMER GROUPS INVOLVED IN THE FLD PILOT**

The pilot project involved three farmer groups namely; Busaana Farmers Association, Patience Pays Farmer Group and Kiwana Rural Development Association. A total of 60 farmers (14: 46 men and women respectively) were involved in the FLD pilot during the implementation stage which has since spilled over to neighboring farming communities. Focus group discussions aided by guiding question was held with farmer representatives for each farmer group with the help of Mr. Eria Bwana-Simba and Mr. Patrick Kasangaki of REN.

### **5.1 Busaana Farmers Association**

Busaana farmers Association is located in Kasaana parish, Kayunga district and is comprised of 20 farmers with a ratio of 3:17 female and male respectively. The group has the highest number of expert farmers (6) and was very active during piloting of the project according to the implementing organization.

### **5.2 Patience Pays Farmers Group**

Patience pays is one of the oldest and well established farmer group with its own office premises and with female leadership, Mrs. Jane Naluwayo as the chairperson. The group is made up of 20 farmers (14 men & 6 female); it is famously known for its solar drying and value addition of agricultural products like pineapples and bananas as well as the recently introduced organic farming. This indicates relatively high levels of exposure to project work and limited challenges in grasping the concept of FLD and integrating it in their activities to further enhance their livelihoods. The group was second to visited in the afternoon of same day. 5 farmer representatives took part in the evaluation with only 1

female. The group had 3 expert farmers at the time of the pilot and was relatively active during the piloting phase. The group also boasts of its own resource center which is accessible to other members of the community since it's near the roadside.

### **5.3 Kiwana Rural Development Association**

Kiwana rural development farmers association is located in Nakaseeta parish, Baale Sub County, 45 kilometers off Galiraya - Baale road. 20 farmers in this group actively took part in the pilot. The group exercised a relatively higher number of women involvement in the FLD pilot with 5 female participants. 8 representatives took part in the evaluation and 4 of them were women. However, the group had only 1 expert farmer which made them to rely more on experts from other farmer groups yet they are located far from the other groups. The group was the last to be evaluated on the 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2008.

## **6.0 OUTCOMES FROM DISCUSSIONS WITH FARMER GROUPS**

### **6.1 Lessons Learnt from the FLD Pilot ;**

According to farmer representatives, the concept of FLD was a new experience to them and a lot of lessons were learnt but most important of all was a realization that they do not have to look for solutions to all their farming problems from extension workers since they have experts within themselves who are rich with indigenous knowledge and are willing to share it with fellow farmers at no cost. It was evident that farmers were excited about the whole concept of FLD but mostly the methodology which was used in the pilot.

### **6.2 How FLD can be best put into practice**

Farmers gave different suggestions on how the FLD can be improved to suit their needs and they are as follows.

- Facilitate expert farmers to directly visit fellow farmers with problems in the field.
- Ask farmers with problems to invite their neighbors when a solution to their problems is being addressed or tackled by the experts.
- Inform local leaders of the FLD activities to avoid sabotage.

- Farmers need cameras for them to continue with the QAS methodology and documenting more farmer problems .
- Avail promotional material of FLD and the partners involved like T -shirts and other logistics in order to build more awareness among the local people about FLD.
- Expert farmers need to be equipped with protective material especially when handling contagious substances and diseased crops.
- Flow of information between implementing organization/ partners and farmers and within the farmers themselves needs to be strengthened.
- Capacity building of expert farmers to further enhance their skills and knowledge to serve fellow farmers better. Refresher courses, seminars and workshops can be organized to update expert farmers with latest information and technology.
- Frequent visits by partners to implementing areas for motivation, checking on progress and offering advice where things are not going so well.
- Avail equipments for preserving certain pests and diseased crops for easy demonstration to other farmers.

### **6.3 Contribution of FLD to sustainable agriculture and natural resource management**

- Improved farm output due to early control and prevention of diseases.
- Helped farmers to adopt sustainable and preventive measures like crop rotation hence sustainable land management.
- It has led to promotion of organic farming after identifying a farmer expert in organic farming.
- FLD has led to spread of best practices through improved information sharing among farmer in different farmer groups.
- FLD has made farmers aware of their capabilities and this has motivated them to work harder to achieve sustainable agricultural production.
- FLD has put more indigenous knowledge into use and passing it on to new generations as well as building on it for better natural resource management and sustainable agriculture.

#### **6.4 Attaching value to knowledge and documentation**

Farmers actually value information/ knowledge especially when it's from fellow farmers whom they have entrusted as experts and have stood the test of time. Use of photographs in documentation has also increased their interest and value of knowledge since most of them cannot read and write but can alternatively express their problems by use of photographs.



*Plate 4: A well kept FLD file at a community resource center*

#### **6.5 Ability of farmers to take the lead in documentation**

The evaluation revealed that, farmers are able to take the lead in documenting their experiences only if they are increasingly made aware of the importance of documentation to their livelihoods and more innovative forms of documentation were introduced. Such innovations should put into consideration the fact that majority of farmers cannot read and write. QAS is atypical example of such innovations but we must also put into consideration the local availability of materials used to ensure continued accessibility.

Farmers are able to take the lead but with little assistance from technical people. For example, farmers of patience pays shared their experience of how they were able to

document about good hygiene in solar drying of agricultural products like pineapples and yellow bananas but with some technical assistance and a book was published.

## **6.6 Sustainability of FLD**

FLD can be sustainable and availability of expert farmers is one live indicator of sustainability. As more farmers are made aware of the importance of documentation and availed with the most relevant techniques, then FLD can be sustainable. However, sustainability of the QAS methodology would depend on continued availability of digital cameras among farmers and further enhancing the capacity of expert farmers to meet the demands of their fellow farmers.

Farmers however provided that, a strong foundation of FLD is needed among communities since it is a relatively new concept among farmer who also need to be facilitated with appropriate technology in order to ensure sustainability.

## **6.7 Challenges encountered during the implementation**

- Farmers are located far apart from each other making it difficult for expert farmers to access them in their gardens.
- Some farmers were not able to give background information to their problems making it difficult for expert farmers to document them and provide solutions.
- Limited facilitation (transport) of expert farmers to visit fellow farmers and assist them to document and provide solutions to their problems.
- Negative attitude of some farmers towards farmer experts making it difficult for them to play their roles hence a setback to FLD.
- The archives obtained from the FLD pilots are small to be referred to other farmers and limited accessibility to digital cameras has made it difficult for more information to be documented using the same methodology.
- Lack of protective wear was a challenge according to expert farmers as they provided that in some cases they had to deal with contagious pests and diseases .

## **6.8 Replication of FLD in other communities**

Farmers of Busaana farmers group reported cases of replication in neighboring farmer groups, villages and sub counties. Parishes include; Namukuma, Busenke, Namusaala, Namirembe and Nabuganyi parish. Farmer groups include; Katamuyima organic farmers association, Tukole wamu farmer group, Bakyala kwekula kulanya farmers association, Namusaala farmers association, Agali awamu farmer group and many others. This replication was basically due to demand driven outreach of the expert farmers to neighboring communities.

Farmers of Patience pays reported replication of FLD in areas of, Nakatundu village, Kangulumira parish, Nakatundu farmers group. Also in Nazigo sub county, 3 farmers had reportedly replicated FLD in their farming activities that is, Sheikh Kafuma and Rose Kalembe.

Farmers of Kiwana reported replication of FLD in, Akuwa gwowa farmers group in Katumba parish, Nyondo village, Ffena twezimbe farmers group in Nakyesa village, Nakyesa parish and Twekembe Namavundu women group in Namavundu village, Namizo parish.

## **6.9 Other FLD Methodologies Introduced Since End of Pilot**

Farmers did not know of any FLD methodologies introduced in their areas since end of pilot project. They however reported cases where several organizations involved farmers in documentation not necessarily farmers taking the lead in documentation but providing the information to organizations as the case has always been in the past. Farmers were not certain of project titles but they provided list of organizations with projects similar to FLD and these are; NAADS, CARITAS, CIDEV and Self Help project.

REN was also conducting a **Question and Answer Service** for Farmers project in conjunction with NARO, CTA and ISICAD which possesses some characteristics similar to the QAS used in the FLD pilot but not farmer led. In this QAS project, a field agent capture the farmer problem and the question is published on the internet, an expert later responds to the farmer's question and then the question is printed and sent to the farmer. For more information, <http://cta.isicad.org>

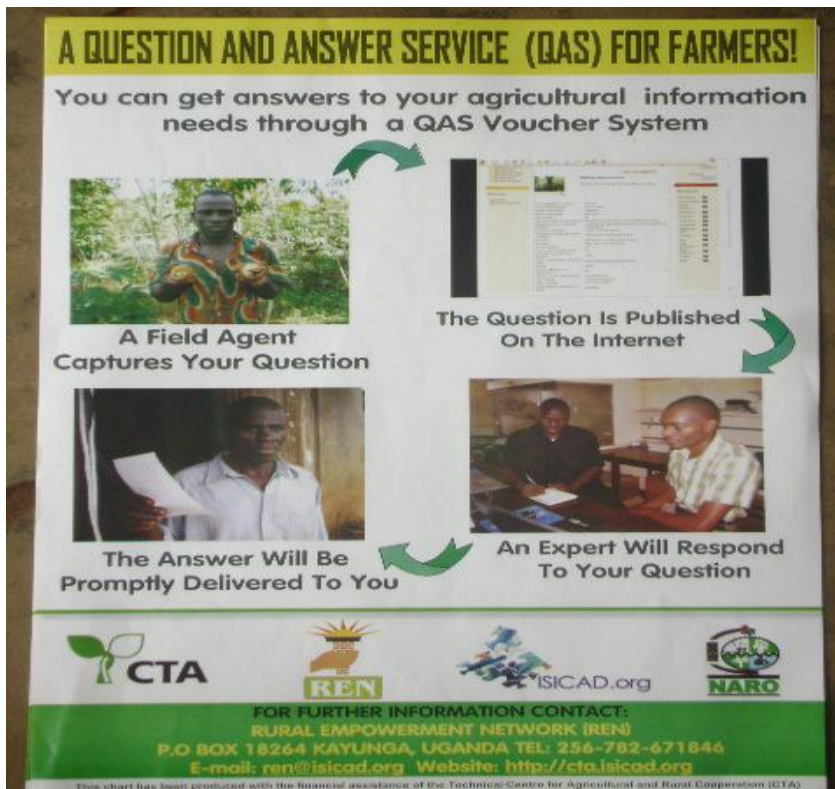


Plate 5: QAS project a little similar to QAS used in FLD by REN

## **7.0 CONCLUSION AND RECCOMENDATIONS**

### **7.1 Conclusion**

According to the follow up evaluation, the FLD pilot project was a success as it was able to achieve the set objectives. The pilot revealed that farmers are actually able to take the lead in documenting their experiences but most importantly it was a learning process on how farmers can be empowered to take documentation to another level. The evaluation also revealed that many farmers are actually involved in documentation one way or another whether it is recording of farm produce, money derived from sell of farm produce and other farmer related events.

Before introduction of the QAS, farmers documented their experiences through other methodologies like note taking, story telling and use of third parties like researcher, extensionist and community workers. The inconsistencies in information generation made it harder for the farmers to realize the true benefits of documentation. Putting the farmers in the lead however makes documentation more realistic and de mand driven.

Community resource centers where the FLD archives were kept are conveniently located and accessible to members of the farmer groups and the communities at large . Other forms of information kept at the resource centers include; magazines on sustainable agriculture, community sketch maps, agricultural related text books, information from development practitioners and a visitor's book. Farmers can freely access and deposit information in the resource centers which are farmer owned and managed.

The methodology used however led farmers to believe that FLD is a new concept in their eyes and there were difficulties for farmers to talk about documentation without referring to digital cameras. A belief within farmers that they have to be facilitated for them to document their experience may overshadow the relevance of the project. Farmers need to be made more aware that taking the lead in documenting the experience is for their own importance which they have to jealously cherish other than looking at it as an experiment than development practitioners are conducting a mong them for their own benefit.

## 7.2 Recommendations

- Farmers need to be involved in determining the most suitable and relevant methodology for documentation. Primary involvement would build a feeling of ownership of the project.
- Methodologies to be used in FLD have to be locally available or accessible to farmers if it is to be farmer led and sustainable. Introducing sophisticated technology in FLD not only is it costly but makes farmers to believe that FLD can only be with such technologies which they cannot access on their own and therefore not for them. Farmers need to be led to believe that FLD is something they can do without hi-tech gadgets.
- Farmers need enough time to grasp the true concept of FLD other than the methodology which is being introduced to them so that they can fully understand its relevance for it to be sustainable.
- There is need for a methodology that incorporates all the experiences of farmers that need to be documented. The QAS methodology seemed to cover issues related to crop pests and diseases and these are easy to capture with digital cameras but some farmer related issues may not be easily documented with digital cameras like seasonal harvest and money earned from sell of farm products yet they are also important to farmers. QAS needs to be supplemented with another methodology that enables documentation of other farmer's experiences or modified to cater for them.
- Further more, farmers need to be encouraged to also document the good experiences so that other farmers can learn from these good experiences and prevent occurrence of bad farming practices.
- There is need for farmers to put more into use the archives derived from the FLD pilot which are kept at the community resource centers, accessible to all farmers . Farmer related problems always tend to be similar in the same locality and therefore it is most likely that similar case of problems faced by some farmers may have been already handled and documented in the pilot.

- Facilitation of cross learning and exchange visits among farmers conducting FLD projects so as to share experiences and learn from each other. This may further broaden the understanding of FLD by farmers.
- If the QAS is to be sustainable then, digital cameras need to be availed to farmer in places where they can easily access them like community resource centers and local leaders. An outside person would then need to monitor if these cameras are being accessed by farmers.
- Up scaling of FLD needs to be done in areas where pilots were implemented so that the lessons learnt and recommendations are put to test in order to come up with the best ways on how FLD can be adopted and sustained in the day to day lives of farmers.
- Progress of pilots also needs to be monitored during the implementation stages to give a clear picture of what goes on in the field. Recommendations can then be made and put to test.

## Appendices

### Appendix1

**Table of participants in FLD follow up Evaluation**

No.	Name	Parish	Sex	Farmer group/ org.
1	Eria Bwana-Simba	Kayunga T.C	Male	<b>REN</b>
2	Patrick Kasangaki	Kayunga T.C	Male	<b>REN</b>
3	Adyebo Ibrahim	Nabuganyi	Male	<b>Busaana Farmers association</b>
4	Iga Rashid	Namukuma	Male	„
5	Lubega Justine	Lusenke	Female	„
6	Okecho George William	Namunkuma	Male	„
7	Osako Yosam	Namusaala	Male	„
8	Nandera Rose	„	Female	„
9	Owori Moses	Namukuma	Male	„
10	Wako Mohammed	Namirembe	Male	„
11	Mulindwa G.M	Busaana	Male	„
12	Naluwairo Charles	Bukolooto	Male	<b>Patience pays farmers group</b>
13	Kasibante Ibrahim	„	Male	„
14	Jane Naluwairo	„	Female	„
15	Kityo Wilson	„	Male	„
16	Kato Elisa	„	Male	„
17	Kalinda Moses	Nakaseeta	Male	<b>Kiwana farmers group</b>
18	Zirimala Eri	Kiwooza	Male	„
19	Nsubuga Emanuel	Mataba	Male	„
20	Nakamyia Edith	Nakaseeta	Female	„
21	Rose Sserwadda	Nakaseeta	Female	„
22	Haniffah Musa	Nakaseeta	Female	„
23	Kizito Charles	Bunyumya	Male	„
24	Sarah Musisi	Nakaseeta	Female	„

## Appendix 2

### Discussion checklist/ guiding question

#### 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