



INSTITUTIONALIZING FIELD SCHOOLS IN EASTERN AFRICA

The nature of challenges faced by smallholder farmers and pastoralists in Eastern Africa today necessitates a high level of coordinated action and cooperation, if they are to gain voice and access markets for their products. Against this background, the Field School (FS) approach has emerged as a tool to address current gaps and needs in the agricultural sector in a holistic manner. Despite the positive impacts being reported on food security and livelihood improvement, as well as the progress made towards institutionalization in some countries, FS impact assessments and reviews have repeatedly pointed out a large number of challenges and barriers to FS expansion, which are jeopardizing the scale-up of the approach. The project aimed to build synergies and complement existing initiatives in the region, in order to use FS to address livelihood concerns among rural poor, and to link directly into these initiatives within the broader FS community.



WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

At regional level an FS Support Hub was established, providing technical support and facilitating knowledge exchange in the subregion. This Hub was successfully transitioned from FAO to the Africa Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS). A web-based social networking platform was developed and launched by the project. Overall, the combination of the web-based and physical sharing, together with the databases of actors and FS information that were put in place by the project, significantly increased communication flow and networking among FS actors in the region. Universities and learning institutions in Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda were sensitized on FS curriculum development. Subsequently, several institutions have gone ahead to plan for the integration of FS modules in their curricula, including fully fledged and Senate-approved courses at Pwani University in Kenya and Hawassa University in Ethiopia. The project's considerable contributions to the development of FS materials, exposure tours, sharing events and global field school discussions had a positive influence on national governments and projects on the use of the FS methodology. The exposure visits of the FS coordinating units/task forces to other countries, and the exchange of information and learning in the regional sharing event that took place in Rwanda, created an evidence base that plays an important role in the uptake of the approach in government projects, as well as in the private sector.

IMPACT

The project contributed to increasing the capacity of vulnerable farmers and agropastoralists to enhance their livelihoods and their productive capacities; as well as to strengthening climate resilience.

KEY FACTS

Contribution

USD 1 172 073

Duration

December 2015 – May 2018

Resource Partner

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

Partners

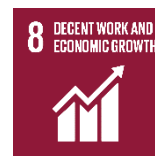
Governments of Ethiopia and Kenya

Beneficiaries

Field School (FS) implementing actors and stakeholders (international and national institutions, research bodies, Non governmental Organizations, government departments, private actors, and farmer networks and cooperatives) across the larger Eastern Africa subregion; extension services and departments in Kenya and Ethiopia and Uganda; farmers and agropastoralists

ACTIVITIES

- FS Support Hub established, and successfully transitioned to an established external institution.
- Knowledge sharing carried out through web-based social networking platform, the regional Eastern Africa social web platform; as well as through over ten face-to-face networking events at regional, country and subcountry levels.
- Guidelines and materials produced, including the completion of an FS Master Trainer course curriculum and FS gender guidelines.
- FS stocktaking study conducted in Ethiopia to review and analyse existing policies, strategies and field experiences on FS in the country, with recommendations for institutionalization.
- Sensitization of institutions of higher learning conducted, including training of faculty staff at Pwani University.
- Core reader on the FS approach produced, targeting college/university students.
- FS impact meta-study carried out to generate policy evidence, providing valuable evidence on FS across technical, social and economic domains, as well as key recommendations.
- Support provided for the participation of the subregion in four regional and global extension forums and meetings.
- Policy exchange tour organized between Kenya, Ethiopia and Rwanda.
- Capacity building provided for extension actors on the FS approach.
- FS stakeholder analysis carried out in Kenya and Ethiopia, and the successful set-up of national coordination platforms and structures in these countries.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Project Code

FAO: GCP/SFE/002/SWI
Donor ID: 81037940

Project Title

Institutionalization of Field Schools in Eastern Africa

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