SCALING UP AGROECOLOGY

Experiences from Uganda

Presentation made at FSL Cluster meeting – SS

11.5.2022
Why Agroecology

- High population growth rate at 3.4% dependent on static resources
- Agriculture contributes 26% of GDP and employs 69% of population. Women smallholder farmers produce over 70% of the food we eat.
- High rate of land degradation costing over 10% of GDP
- Increasing climate change effects and high vulnerability of SHFs
Why Agroecology

- Failure of conventional agriculture to deliver inclusive socio-economic development and resilience
- Need for more aggregated land for plantations leading to increasing cases of land grabbing and destruction of natural ecosystems
- Inappropriate use of chemicals leading to contamination and poisoning
- Current development challenges of unemployment, income inequality, malnutrition and unhealthy lifestyles (2019/2020 Budget speech)
• Focus on agriculture that is based more on biodiversity and ecosystem services than monocultures, fossil fuels and chemical inputs.
Defining Agroecology

FAO defines agroecology as a scientific discipline, a set of practices and a social movement.

• As a science, agroecology studies how different components of the agroecosystem interact

• As a set of practices, it seeks sustainable farming systems that optimize and stabilize yields

• As a social movement, it pursues multi-functional roles for agriculture, promotes social justice, nurtures identity and culture, and strengthens the economic viability of rural areas.
The 10 elements of agroecology
Conventional Farming Vs Agroecology

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conventional Farming</th>
<th>Agroecology</th>
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<tr>
<td>Intensification through excessive exploitation resulting into short term booms and long term slumps</td>
<td>Optimizes interactions between humans, plants, animals and environment to increase and sustain high production</td>
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<td>Rely on hardly available external inputs</td>
<td>Rely on locally available resources and knowledge offering real time feasible solutions</td>
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<td>External costly inputs which are destructive to the environment</td>
<td>Closed nutrient cycles reduce negative externalities and wastes maintaining robust productive systems</td>
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<td>High costs of production concentrate jobs in hands of few rich large scale farms</td>
<td>Spreads jobs in the system, increasing the impact on local economies</td>
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<td>Concentrates power of inputs in industry ruling out any form of sovereignty for smallholder farmers</td>
<td>Sovereignty embedded in co-creation of knowledge to determine inputs and what to produce</td>
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<td>Values scientific knowledge and underrates indigenous knowledge</td>
<td>Fuses scientific and indigenous knowledge to create practical solutions that are socially acceptable</td>
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<td>Desirous of industrially revolutionizing agriculture which leads to seizing small holder farmers into debt and deconstructing the social fabric hence transforming smallholder farmers into workers on their farms</td>
<td>Builds social and economic resilience which is fundamental for smallholder farmers that form majority of Ugandan population</td>
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<td>Farfetched based on magical bullets and one size fits all innovations</td>
<td>Close to existing farming production methods requiring innovations within available indigenous and scientific knowledge systems</td>
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The paradigm shift

- AE changes paradigm for development; from the current sectoral approach where social, economic, and ecological development are seen as separate parts.
- It calls for a transition toward a world logic where the economy should serve society so that it evolves within the safe boundaries of the planet’s climate and ecosystems (IPES, 2016)
### Examples of Agroecology practices

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Practices (applicable for Uganda)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Describing common characteristics of agroecological systems, farm level practices and innovation approaches in a farm system</strong></td>
<td>Diversity; Synergies; Efficiency; Resilience; Recycling; co-creation and sharing of knowledge</td>
<td>mixed farming (integrating crops and livestock)</td>
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<td>Human and social values; Culture and food traditions</td>
<td>intercropping (including legumes with other crops)</td>
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<td>agroforestry</td>
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<td>mulching and cover cropping</td>
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<td>soil and water conservation practices (contour bunds, terraces, trenches etc)</td>
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<td>composting and organic fertilizer application</td>
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<td>permaculture and integrated land use design practices</td>
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<td>backyard gardening technologies</td>
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<td>farmer managed natural regeneration</td>
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<td>participatory and farmer led action research</td>
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<td>promoting local innovations in agriculture and natural resource management</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>use of indigenous micro organisms</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Use of bio fertilizers and bio pesticides</td>
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<td><strong>Context features</strong></td>
<td>Responsible governance; Circular and solidarity economy</td>
<td>Promoting agriculture practices that respect peoples’ cultures and foods</td>
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<td>Promoting farmer managed seed systems and community seed banks</td>
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<td>Promoting utilization and sustainable management of traditional and wild foods (indigenous food and seed fairs)</td>
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<td>Empowerment of women and vulnerable groups</td>
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<td><strong>Enabling environment</strong></td>
<td>Farmer movement building to influence policies and practices that affect farmers rights</td>
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<td>Capacity building of farmer organizations to engage in policy development processes and hold leaders accountable</td>
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<td>Participatory guarantee systems</td>
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<td>Rural economic development initiatives</td>
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<td>Farmer led value chain initiatives</td>
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<td>Promoting land rights for vulnerable men and women</td>
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Towards scaling up Agroecology in Uganda

Key Actions
Landmark activities/initiatives


Theme: Advancing multi stakeholder responsiveness towards scaling-up of agroecology in Uganda

- Pioneer event in Uganda aimed at domesticating discussions and actions from 2nd International symposium on AE held by FAO in Rome
- Event was attended by over 250 agroecology actors ranging from public sector (relevant MDAs), academia, private sector, farmers and international delegates.
- A communique with strong call to action for deliberate actions for scaling up agroecology in Uganda
Launch of the National Agroecology Actors Platform

• National Agroecology Actors Platform was launched by the former PS, MAAIF (Mr. Pius Wakabi) at the 1st National Agroecology Actors Symposium.

• Platform has over 270 members ranging from NGOs, private sector, academia and farmer organisations among others.

• 4 regional (eastern, Northern, western and central) agroecology actors platforms also formed with their steering committees.

• Core function: facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogues, experience sharing and synergies towards scaling up agroecology
2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} National Agroecology actors symposiums

2\textsuperscript{nd} National Annual Agroecology Actors Symposium (29\textsuperscript{th} October, 2020).
Theme: Agroecology for Resilient and Sustainable Food Systems
• Followed up on commitments of 1\textsuperscript{st} NAAS
• Strong involvement of FAO national and international office
• Called for National Strategy for scaling up agroecology

3\textsuperscript{rd} National Agroecology Actors Symposium (28\textsuperscript{th} October, 2021)
Theme: Transforming Uganda’s food systems through agroecology
• Stocktaking for progress towards scaling agroecology in Uganda
• Road map for developing a National AE strategy
Process for development of National strategy for scaling up Agroecology

- Idea was birthed during the 1st National Strategy for scaling up agroecology in 2019
- Initial concept note and partnership letter developed and shared with former Ps. MAAIF
- Buy in from the former PS and process and a MAAIF official assigned to spearhead the process
- New PS re-assigns process to the commissioner crop production
- ToR developed for consultancy commissioned to develop AE strategy with financial support from Biovision foundation, Trocaire & others
- Draft process ongoing; internal inception, context analysis and process review meeting held with consultants
Other Agroecology projects and interventions

Agroecology for climate action campaign
- AFSA led campaign to influence climate change narrative to recognize agroecology as an alternative building resilience to climate change

Integrating Agroecology in Uganda’s updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)
- Biovision foundation & AFSA supported initiative aimed at influencing updated NDCs to integrate agroecology

Agroecological farming in Uganda (funded by Swedish postkod lottery)
- Aims at transitional smallholder farming systems in central and eastern region from chemical based on diversified agroecological farming systems

Resource Rights and Use project (Trocaire funded)
- Focused on climate resilient agroecological practices, farmer managed seed systems, neglected and wild edible plants and gender (GALS)

Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative (EOAI)
- AU led initiative for mainstreaming EOA in African governments agricultural systems.
Other Agroecology projects and interventions- 2

Sowing Diversity = Harvesting Security  (SD=HS) phase 2
• Oxfam Novib/ SIDA funded project aimed at empowering smallholder farmer on sustainable use and management of agrobiodiversity for better livelihoods in the context of climate change using farmer field schools

Scaling Up agroecology in Uganda
• Biovision foundation supported project focusing on supporting development of national agroecology strategy, strengthening of national and regional agroecology actors platforms.

Climate Resilient Agro-Ecosystems Model (CRAEM)
• A community led empowerment model for strengthening community resilience to climate change using agroecological principles and practices

Community Managed Seed Security Model (CMSS)
• Model for promoting community led seed security and sovereignty for enhanced agrobiodiversity, resilience nutrition and income.

Annual Indigenous Food and Seed Fairs: Annual events held at regional and national levels for the last 10 year to revive the utilization and sustainable management of indigenous foods for better nutrition and agrobiodiversity.
Other Agroecology projects and interventions - 3

**Youth in Agroecology and Business Learning Track Africa (YALTA)**
- Aimed at empowering youth to develop sustainable businesses using agroecological principles.

**Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture**
- Generating, validating and dissemination of organic agriculture knowledge among farmers and actors.

**Pesa Agro-Enterprise Marketing Model**
- Farmer led agroecological value chain development and empowerment model (circular and territorial market development)

**Gender Action Learning systems**
- Household/community empowerment approach to addressing gender inequalities for equitable use and management of natural resources and

**Securing land and natural resource Rights:**
- Land rights awareness creation and access to alternative dispute resolution for sustainable and equitable land management
TAPE

Genesis

• Malawi workshop in 2018
• Piloted in Uganda with a few farmers
• Customised the tool as per the local context
• Tested the Tool
• Monitored results for 3 years 2019 to 2021

• Learnings from the pilot
• Challenges from the pilot
• How the tool is being used among by other partners/organisations
Agroecology transition results (TAPE/CAET)

Agroecology Characterisation for Palam SubCounty - Katakwi 2019 to 2021

- Diversity
- Enabling environment for agroecology
- Co-creation & sharing of knowledge
- Responsible governance
- Synergies
- Resilience
- Efficiency
- Circular and solidarity economy
- Human and Social Value
- Culture and food tradition

Comparative analysis over years 2019, 2020, and 2021.
Moving forward

• Finalise and implement the National strategy for scaling up agroecology
• Mainstreaming agroecology in public research and extension systems (also in agricultural budgets)
• Strengthening agroecological market systems for enhanced rural livelihoods
• Strengthening and operationalisation of the National and regional Agroecology Actors platform
• Further support and implementation of the AU led EOAI to anchor agroecology scaling up
• Further pushing the agenda for Agroecology for climate action
Support to CTP & Partners

• We concluded a five day training on Agroecology with CTP partners in Yirol
• We have a three month agreement to support the team
• Next visit will be on technical support on farm with the farmers where more practical sessions will be done.
Questions for reflection

1. What opportunities do exist for South Sudan to promote and scale up agroecology?
2. What are the likely barriers for scaling up agroecology in south Sudan?
3. How can these barriers be addressed to facilitate a more effective scaling up initiative for south Sudan?
4. Are there opportunities for introducing TAPE in most projects introducing Agroecology in SS?
5. Is there a platform of stakeholders in SS where Agroecology is promoted/discussed?