



Africa Agriculture Science Week & FARA General Assembly

10-16 June 2007
Johannesburg, South Africa



FARA 4th General Assembly Side Event Report June 10-11, 2007

Name of side event:	African Grassroots Innovation for livelihoods and the Environment (AGILE)
Sponsoring organization(s):	LandCare International
Name(s) & email(s) of contact persons:	Joseph Tanui

Background/rationale of the side event

The development agenda in sub-Saharan Africa is replete with challenges of natural resource degradation, loss of biodiversity, hunger and malnutrition and rural decline. In terms of investments, analysts pointing out the dismal growth performance over the post independence period often note that investment was significantly lower in Africa than other regions (Devarajan, S. et al, 2003). Equally analyses of the productivity of economy-wide investments especially in Agriculture across the country (institutions, households and individuals) as well as insights into the underlying processes generating the aggregate results have not been fully understood. This mainly points out at “weak institutional capacity” widely viewed as a critical constraint to realizing widespread and enduring improvements in the practice and impact of sustainable agriculture and natural resource management including biodiversity conservation.

Conventional approaches to agricultural research and development have not only emphasized production over livelihoods and short-term economic gain over sustainability but have tended to embrace reductionism resulting in institutions specializing in either production or conservation. This structural constraint clearly reduces chances for innovation and market development that would in turn stimulate investments. Further, examples from studies on the adoption of sustainable practices and advanced farming systems have found that the adoption of these technologies has rarely met the point of rapid diffusion because of imperfect information, capital, and/or income constraints, market failures and other reasons (Caviglia, J. & Kahn, J. 2001). There is therefore a need for systems/approaches that can generate and communicate alternative visions of land use, link individual interests and efforts with those of communities and societies they live in, and better balance the competing aspirations for raising agricultural productivity, foster ecological sustainability, promote rural cohesion and vitality.

The Landcare¹ concept is founded on the role of collective action in environmental conservation. Environmental degradation such as soil erosion, deforestation, siltation and loss of biodiversity has particularly severe impacts on poor natural resource-dependent communities in developing countries. Further, it is recognized that although land degradation is a physical process, its underlying causes are deeply rooted in the cultural, social-economic and political context. There is also a growing realization that while Natural Resources Management (MRN) techniques, within pilot projects have enjoyed some successes, their extension over a wide areas or application by a wider range of community membership have been dismal (Blaikie, 1985; Cramb, 2000). A key hypothesis is that up scaling of Landcare initiatives is contingent upon factors that foster collective action.

A strong community level institution is able to leverage upon the changes in governance of natural resource management evident in many countries in Africa. These changes reflect growing democratization and strengthening capacity in local governments. Collective action, public-private partnerships, modification of property rights, and continuous improvement in understanding of principles and practices of democratic processes are essential elements to address many of the

¹ Landcare is viewed as a movement led by the grassroots to foster improved livelihoods & environment and spreads through social energies of individuals, communities and supporters. It is considered as a basis for autonomous farmer-led organizations concerned with the long-term health of the land.

critical challenges of natural resources management. The emerging paradigm of participatory management of natural resources calls for changes in planning and implementation of NRM interventions that give local people and the broader society, a voice and opportunity to participate in decision-making and in implementing practical solutions to reverse the problems of NR degradation.

The African Landcare Network in conjunction with Landcare South Africa and Landcare International invites you to a side event on ***“Fostering community level Institutions and leadership for sustainable Land management in Africa”*** on **10th June 2007 from 2.00 pm to 4.30 pm** during the General Assembly meeting of the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) in Sandton City, Johannesburg, South Africa. The session will be addressed by experts and practitioners of Landcare who will share their experiences in the development of community led institutions for sustainable land management. The meeting will also be an opportunity to brainstorm on the different roles that the African Landcare Network, the Landcare International alliance and individual national Landcare movements would play in scaling up Landcare practices to benefit a bigger cross section of community members in Africa.

General Event Objectives

- Through experience sharing, explore the role of community led institutions in sustainable land management, and highlight best practices for community level institutional development.
- Describe possibilities/opportunities for the Landcare International alliance, the African Landcare Network and national Landcare programmes in up scaling of Landcare

Principle agreements / actions / recommendations

Recommendation	Who
1. Continue with the capacity building and cross visit whereby creating continual engagement of public participation in decision making and facilitating access to skills transfer for sustainable use of the natural resources	Country, regional and International
2. Reach out more farmers and community organization to adopt the LandCare approach	Country, Regional and International
3. Research the impact of LandCare approach on projects to date	Country and regional
4. Stimulate and develop more partnership with FARA	Country, regional and International LC members
5. Market the role of LandCare as part of the conventions i.e. CBD, CSD, CCD	LandCare Regional and International committee
6. Seek opportunity for UN declaration of LandCare	LandCare International
7. Develop country markets as driving force for the LandCare programme. This will include Branding using the logo and food produced through ecological friendly way	Country, regional and International LC members
Side event linked to which FARA networking support function? (check one)	<input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy and resource mobilization <input type="checkbox"/> Access to knowledge and technologies <input type="checkbox"/> Regional policies and markets <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Capacity strengthening – with the theme “Fostering community level Institutions and leadership for sustainable Land management in Africa” <input type="checkbox"/> Partnerships and strategic alliances

Where relevant, note who has success stories, &/or useful resource people or institutions related to side-event theme

Useful resource people related to the site event theme:

1. Ms Njabulo Nduli- FARA Chairperson
2. Dennis Garrity- DG World Agro forestry
3. Mahomed Bakarr –World Agro forestry