



**African Farm/Family Forestry Producer Organizations Exchange Visit
*for Innovations and improved livelihoods***



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INTRODUCTION /Background

In many African countries, the natural forests are being degraded. This is usually a function of there being inadequate local control over forest resources, which undermines incentives to manage and restore them. This degradation is creating an increasing demand-supply gap that increases commercial returns to tree growers. As a result, an important change is beginning to happen: families are deciding to plant more trees on their own farms. This has led to the formation of forest farm producer organizations and federations. However, these organisations have faced many challenges that threaten their sustainability. One such challenge has been to ensure that their members access markets and financial services for their forest products. The other one has been the ability to engage with government forest agencies to solve conflicts that arise out of unclear tenure arrangements.

To ensure the strengthening and sustainability of these family farm forest

Organizations, it is necessary that they share information among each other and use this information to articulate their views and influence policy formulation by government agencies. Further, through their networks, they should be able to access resources that can build their capacity to serve their members more effectively. Kenya is distinctive in that it has been able to raise the profile of forestry not just nationally but far beyond. Nationally this is reflected in earmarked programs all the way down to the local government level- and a high level of awareness on forestry programmes and initiatives across the government and non-governmental sector.

It is envisaged that the visit provide a platform for mutual learning across the FFF countries with opportunities for partnership and South-South collaboration going forth. Learning should focus both on the successes, as well as on some of the obstacles and how they are being overcome.

ATTENDANCE

The Exchange Visit attracted a total of twenty (24) participants from FFF Country in Africa, Liberia, Kenya, Zambia and the Gambia, and is intended for family farm forest business organizations, broader locally controlled forestry networks, forest and farm producer organizations, associations and federations, policy-makers, universities, researchers, non-government organizations, working with family farm forestry groups. Further discussions was focus on those working on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+), legality assurance schemes linked to the EU Forest Law Enforcement Governance and trade (FLEET) Action plan, smallholder forest certification, and regional attempts to restore degraded forests and lands such as the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative.

PLACES/STAKEHOLDERS VISITED

Facilitated with national partners like Kenya Forest Service (KFS) We Effect and Local Partners, the field visit took us to Nukuru County on June 6, 2015. During this time we visited many small holders farms, Charcoal Production, Trees Nursery Association, School Tree project among many others.

Exchange visit objectives

The main objective of the exchange visit is to enable Africa FFF countries to learn and share experiences from forest and farm producer organizations (FFPOs) and the enabling environment in Kenya. The specific objective is to exchange, learn and discuss with delegates of FFPOs of the respective countries on topics related to the following areas:

- Enabling policy and institutional framework in support of farm forestry
- Socio-economic benefits and incentives for farm forestry and community-based forestry
- Organizational structure and governance of FF producer organizations
- Implementation arrangements
- Capacity development strategy
- Challenges and opportunities for FFPO's
- Linkages /partnerships with related programmes and organizations
- Sustainability strategy of FFPOs
- Partnerships

Methodology

- Meetings
- Round Table Group discussions
- Plenary Discussion
- Country Presentation
- Questions and answer sessions
- Field visitations and feedbacks
- Demonstrations
- Observations

VISIT AGREED OUTPUTS

- ⇒ A collaborative report on the learning outcomes from this visit
- ⇒ Recommendations for learning and scale-up for the FFF countries
- ⇒ A plan for further linkages, networking, innovations and collaboration among FFF countries
- ⇒ Using the knowledge and skills acquired during the exchange to develop model that enhances and promotes National, Regional and sub-regional intervention in the FFF project areas especially in respect to enterprise development.

Key Emerging Issues/ lessons learnt

Over the period of the learning and exchange visits 6th-8th June 2015, conclusions were made with a summary of the following reflections and observations:

- i. The communities are now being able to identify the categories of farmers and producers groups and by ways of establishing mapping processes that determines income and earning capabilities. This draws on the fact that based on the presentations of the social mapping process which the communities themselves designed, it is evident that the number of farmers and forest producers living within the "A" category are networking and can afford basic livelihood opportunities.
- ii. The various categories show classes of forest users and community dwellers which determine the way, they contribute on the basis of their status but get equal access and network more;

- iii. The local forest and farm producers are link to marketing and promote the bottom to top approach to sanitation scale up, promote democratic ownership and sustainability;

GOVERNANCE AND FINANCING

Financing

With the communities visited, observations we made around financing models and mechanisms was a bit slow in some areas in the promotion of access to improved forest aspects on the livelihood and enterprise development.

- Community clustering is one strategy that helps in maintaining these facilities promote local ownership, sustainability and for the efficient benefit of the general community and its inhabitants.
- Financing of the sector is done through the government, local NGOs, and beneficiary communities. Grants are provided by multilateral, bilateral, INGOs and development partners. Interestingly, beneficiary community contribution is unique to the Kenya context.

Governance

- Governance processes in the Forest sector is observed to be in the Central Government, Local Government and Community Level. This, according to sources is intended to promote democratic participation.
- Policy formulation, implementation and guidance regarding the sector
- Monitoring and evaluating the works of NGOs and communities
- Direct implementation of government policies and services to communities
- Regulate, monitor and evaluate NGOs, CSOs and CBOs
- Resource mobilization, allocation and capacity development
- Provides security for facilities through collaboration with local government and relevant sector partners.
- The Communities creates awareness among community members on the usage of the forest and management.
- Responsible to mobilize community level involvement and participation in national and local level forest initiatives;
- Promotes bottom to top approach to service delivery

Enabling environment:

1. Political Commitment of the Governments, African Union has been the major driving force for achieving progress in forest sector. This commitment has been reflected in taking various policy decisions and initiating a number of important interventions that contributed enormously to achieving the FFF goal.
2. Kenya took leading role in organizing and hoisting the 1st African Farmers Conference in collaboration with other national, international and UN organizations. In order to have a better implementation and monitoring mechanism of forestry Sector. Governments has also institutionalized interventions through forming and supporting Forestry programs, at National to grassroots levels.

Government's, NGOs, Development Partners, Civil Society, media and private sector institutions willingness to work in partnership have provided a wider platform for forming multi stakeholders partnerships that played a catalytic role in the Forest Sector and created a synergistic effect in achieving the goal of FFF for strengthen small holders and idegenuous people for livelihood opportunities and policy dialogue. This partnership has helped a lot in mobilizing resources that are needed for the sector.

Equity and inclusion

In an effort to address the issue of inequality which is very common in Africa especially involving marginalized groups in development planning and national decision making, our attention is particularly drawn to the inclusion of women, youths, Indigenous and communities people who are the most affected.

1. Speaking through the experiences from the visits conducted, it clearly shows how people are involved from consultations to actions. As such, community has its own administration through the Development of Association.
2. For the fact that communities are now able to draw up their own social mapping and action plan, it is worthy of note that the entire process is being pioneered by the local forest and farm producers community members which helps in triggering them to action and allowing them identify common solutions to forestry problems apparent within their communities.

Weakness of the Kenya Context:

1. Despite the many efforts of NGOs, CBOs, KFS and community stakeholders, there are still apparent threats on the forest communities as government keeps giving measure, controlling communities' forest and directing Investment. Another key issues is that there is no market for local farmers and forest producers who are planting trees. In some area they are not working as a group but rather individually.

Recommendations

Based on experiences shared by KFS, We Effect and local communities, we recommend the following actions at the various national levels for the FFF countries.

- We request the holding of Forest and farm producers Conventions at the various levels to attract popular attention and trigger political and policy change/commitments.
- With the ardent hit of climate change in our various countries, it is recommended that forest and farm producers be train in farmer field school.
- The need for the Regional and sub – regional Networks reached at the learning platform to be encouraged by Forest Sector stakeholders to facilitate/mainstream networking sub regional and regional advocacy on Forest issues.
- Financing Forest Sector for enterprise development
- Creating market linkages and trade development
- FFPO's engage in Policy advocacy on forestry to increase local communities voices

Conclusion

To conclude the Liberian team at the exchange visit has committed themselves to supporting the FFF mission and Vision in Liberia; and also thanks the organizers, sponsors, partners for supporting the FFF program Globally,

Regional and sub regionally. We also expressed our harvest thanks and appreciation to the FAO family for their support before, now, after and in the future. To our fellow participants we look forward to networking and collaborating at global, regional and sub regional and national's levels.

Organization / Institution Representing Liberia

Name	Organization / Institution	Position
Kolly S. Allison	FAO	FFF Facilitator
J. Momolu Bass	Farmers Union Network	National Coordinator
Richard Dorbor	National Charcoal Union of Liberia	President
Ethel Wion	Farmers Union Network	Gender Officer
Edward Kamara	Forestry Development Authority	Wood Economist

Photos:



Visit at a Bee ground



Liberian Team Planting Tree



Visit at Local Forestry Group



Participants from FFF Country



Participants during a tour



FFF manager Jeff Cambell addressing participants at KFS



Participants at KFS Conference room