

KENYA

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Description of Activity:

EAPLEC was one of the five fully funded cluster by GEF of UNEP through United Nation University (UNU) Tokyo. The Kenya sub-cluster had selected two sites based on ethnic communities, richness in biodiversity, Agro-ecological zones (AEZ) and socio-economic factors by 1998.

After initial characterisation of the sites through PRA methods and biophysical survey, the Kenya sub-cluster reorganized its activities on advise of the PLEC technical advisor. This involved discontinuing of the Kiambu site and scaling down the 45 km long Embu site to a focal area of about 11 km², instead of spreading thinly with minimal coverage of the landscape. Therefore demonstration site was confined to Nduuri as the Kenyan site which lies in the upper midland 2 (UM2) Agro-ecological zone (AEZ) as classified by Jaetzold and Shmidt (1983) within the Kirimiri-Karue catchment. Administratively Nduuri falls under Mukuuri sub-location, Kagaari South location, Runyenjes' Division, Embu District of Eastern Province. Mukuuri sub location has a total population of 5978 inhabitants (CBS 1999), comprising 2928 male and 3050 female.

This was followed by a focused PRA to identify and monitor good indigenous farming practices adopted by individual farmers. The indigenous technologies' scientific rationale was studied and farmers with successful technologies selected as experts to teach others. Therefore farmer to farmer visits were encouraged and field days organized to facilitate the dissemination. In areas where researchers found a production gap, new production technologies compatible to their land use system were demonstrated in the area and the farmers made the choice on what to try on their farms.

The biodiversity and agro diversity data was collected and database established for this area as well as characterisation of households. Other focused survey on fruits and vegetables, botanical knowledge gap and home gardens were conducted and information obtained from this survey was discussed with the cluster members on how to solve some of the problems identified in farmers workshops. The principal production constraints in the area were identified as: declining soil productivity due to continuous cultivation without adequate soil nutrient replenishment, declining soil productivity due to cultivation of steep slopes without adequate soil and water conservation measures, shortage of livestock feeds especially during dry season and inadequate tree-crop interactions.

Some of the identified technologies include incorporating fig tree in coffee plantation and addition of farmyard manure to enhance soil fertility. Terracing and mulching is also practised to control soil erosion. Other technologies demonstrated included indigenous technical knowledge to control coffee stem borers, top working on Ruiru 11 disease resistant coffee onto older susceptible varieties, enhancing biodiversity in coffee field to increase land production and strategic horticultural production under irrigation.