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SOKOINE UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE

AGROECOLOGY HUB IN TANZANIA (AEHT)

Newsletter

Issue No. 1 (Archive): March, 2024



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@agro-ecologyhubintanzania



Prof. Dismas L. Mwaseba

About AEHT Newsletter

The Agroecology Newsletter Archive presents a collection of selected news, events, publications, stories, innovations and initiatives on agroecology during 2023 from all over Tanzania. A new issue will be released annually on a quarterly basis in June, September, and December. The newsletter will be published in both English and Kiswahili.



Message from the AEHT's Principal Investigator

For 5 years now, Agroecology AEHT in Tanzania (AEHT), through the financial support of the McKnight Foundation based in the United States of America, has joined hands with various partners to promote agroecological intensification for sustainable food systems in the country. The AEHT's partners are individual farmers, Farmer Research Networks (FRNs), the private sector and public institutions. Public institutions include universities (e.g. Sokoine University of Agriculture-SUA and Nelson Mandela African Institute of Science and Technology -NM-AIST); government ministries, particularly the Ministry of Agriculture Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries as well as the National Environment Management Council (NEMC) (Vice President Office) and research institutions including Tanzania Agricultural Research Institute (TARI) and Tanzania Livestock Research Institute (TALIRI).

This newsletter seeks to provide to both farmers and other stakeholders with access to information, knowledge, technologies and practices on agroecology and thus contribute to Global Collaboration for Resilient Food Systems (CRFS) program under the McKnight Foundation whose goal is to cultivate resilient food systems globally by bridging farmer-centered agroecological research, action, and influence.

Location of the AEHT

The secretariat of the AEHT is at SUA in the Morogoro Municipality, Tanzania. However, information and knowledge about agroecology are drawn from partners ranging from individual farmers or those organized under FRNs, and farmer groups, as well as the private sector and public institutions.

Selected Highlights of Major Events in 2023

1. Participation in Sokoine Memorial Exhibitions in May 2023

In year 2023, AEHT participated in the 18th Sokoine Memorial Week Exhibitions held from 23rd to 26th May 2023 at Edward Moringe Campus, SUA. The exhibitions were officially opened by Hon Abdallah Hamis Ulega, the Minister of Livestock and Fisheries and officially closed by Hon. Judith Nguli, District Commissioner of Mvomero District in Morogoro region. The theme of the exhibitions was “Enabling Environment for Youth Engagement in the Agricultural Sector of Tanzania: Policy, Guidelines and Practices”. Six farmers (3M, 3F) collaborating with the AEHT partners, namely Sustainable Agriculture in Tanzania (SAT), the Research Community and Development Association (RECODA), and Farmer Research Networks in Kyela District Council took part in the exhibitions. They displayed various ecological organic products including different varieties of traditional seeds such as maize, beans and sunflowers among others. The most important varieties displayed were Njano 29, Saro 5, Faya Jesca, Soya, and SUA Karanga varieties.



Farmers from the AEHT partners explaining to visitors during the Sokoine Memorial Week exhibitions



Farmers from the Hub giving explanations to Visitors during the Sokoine Memorial Week exhibitions in 2023

2. Agricultural Exhibitions (Nanenane) held at Mwalimu Nyerere Grounds in Morogoro, 2023

Agroecology AEHT in Tanzania (AEHT) participated in the 30th Farmers' Agricultural Exhibitions in the Eastern Zone popularly known as Nanenane. The exhibitions were held from 1st to 8th of August 2023 at Mwalimu Nyerere Grounds in Morogoro region. The theme of the exhibitions was "Youth and women are the firm foundation of sustainable food systems". Hon. Mizengo Kayanza Peter Pinda, former Prime Minister of the United Republic of Tanzania, officially opened the exhibitions while Hon Waziri Kindamba, Regional Commissioner of Tanga Region closed the exhibitions. Generally, the exhibitions provided farmers the opportunity of sharing of knowledge and practices of agroecology.



Farmers' displays - local seed varieties of sunflower, beans, paddy, and ginger during the exhibitions



AEHT farmers participated in Nane Nane 2023



3. Field workshop on raising awareness and building capacity in landscape approach to agroecology

The Global Collaboration for Resilient Food Systems Programme (CRFS) (formerly Collaborative Crop Research Programme – CCRP) for Eastern and Southern Africa organized a partner workshop in Malawi from 13th -15th June, 2023 “to share learning, reflect on, co-create and start testing a framework and tools for supporting landscape transformation”. Two researchers from the Hub participated in the partner workshop, which brought together participants from Malawi, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

Later from 20th to 24th September, 2023 the AEHT team that participated in the workshop in Malawi organized a training of the trainers (ToT) in Singida Municipality for the AEHT partners. The overall objective of the workshop was to build capacity in the landscape approach to agroecology by engaging representatives from the AEHT partners who would then train their staff to facilitate farmers (as FRN members) and other stakeholder groups to acquire and apply the knowledge gained. More specifically, the training was expected to achieve the following:

- (i) share concepts about land scape and importance of working at landscape level;
- (ii) co-develop tools that can be used for co identification of assets with communities;
- (iii) familiarize with FRN work and groups in Singida;
- (iv) test the tool in the field, and provide feedback on the tool, and
- (v) develop plans for future.

Besides, the workshop brought together a total of 10 participants from the AEHT partners including RECODA, SAT, TARI Uyole in Mbeya and SUA. Also, the fieldwork involved 36 farmers from Msimihi and Sekoture villages in Singida.



Hub’s researchers and members of FRNs in Singida district characterising agroecology using participatory resources mapping, resource flow and assessing institutional set up and governance of natural resources in the landscape



Resource map and resource flows of the two villages survey - Sekoture and Msimihi village respectively.

4. Students Celebrating Successful Completion of their Studies on 23rd November, 2023

The AEHT is making significant contribution to capacity building in agroecology in the country. Thus, on 23rd October, 2023 four out of seven students, with research support from the AEHT for their undergraduate and postgraduate training, had the occasion to celebrate their successful completion of their studies. Of these five were Bachelor degree students, and two were Master students.



Apruna Ndagara (B.Sc. in Veterinary Medicine)



Catherine Mwanjisi, BSc in Horticulture



Mkoka Hamza, MSc in Crop Science



Lukombeso Emmanuel Udumbe, MSc. Crop Science

5. The National Ecological Organic Agriculture Conference

The Third National Ecological Organic Agriculture Conference (NEOAC) was held in Dodoma at Saint Gasper Conference Centre from 8th to 9th November, 2023. The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) in collaboration with the Tanzanian Organic Agriculture Movement (TOAM) hosted the event. Last year's theme of NEOAC was "Nurturing Nature, Harvesting Health". The Conference brought together different stakeholders from FRNs, private and public sectors including TOAM, SUA, SAT, Alliance for Biodiversity (TABIO), Milele Zanzibar Foundation (MZF), PELUM Tanzania, European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), SWISSAID, Control Union (CU) and the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich (ETHZ). Other participants were from the Embassy of France, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), the Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative from the African Union (EOA-I), BIORE Foundation as well as policy makers and decision makers from government ministries and public institutions. One of the important events during the conference was the launching of the National Ecological Organic Agriculture Strategy (NEOAS). It was officiated by the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Honourable (MP) David Silinde on 8th November 2023.



The Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Honourable David Silinde (MP) launching NEOAS

In addition, the Conference provided opportunity for parallel sessions of agroecology practices for increased productivity (FYM, Compost and Organic pesticides) of which Prof. Dismas Mwaseba and Prof. Kallunde Sibuga from the AEHT presented. Also, it provided opportunity for exhibitions of various agroecological technologies and products in which the AEHT partners participated actively.



Keynote speakers: Professor D. Mwaseba (PI, AEHT) first right and Prof. KP Sibuga (members of AEHT) left discussing the opportunities and challenges on scaling up agroecology principles in Tanzania

Some of the emerging issues during the conference were:

- Need for strengthening organic markets including promotion of territorial markets standards, quality assurance, metrology verification, risk assessment, accreditation, harmonization, conflict resolution systems and certification and associated hard and software infrastructure.
- Transformation of food systems requires a holistic and integrated approach leaving no one behind and no one is an empty glass.
- Intentional documentation of cost benefit analysis at all levels to encourage incremental investment in agroecology.
- Customer awareness be incorporated in targeted consumer awareness to create demand for agroecological products.
- Technical capacity enhancement requires investment in capacity building of all to equip food supply chain actors with requisite knowledge, skills, competences to engage profitably and consciously in agroecology. This will involve training, education, coaching and mentorship including incubation and commercialization of innovative ideas.
- Innovative financing model, financial institutions and impact financiers need a better understanding of agroecology principles to design suitable financial products and services for the same including appreciating the contribution of social enterprises in agroecology agenda.
- Digitalization leveraging on the opportunities offered by digital platforms to create wide spread campaign for agroecology social media platforms offer a sure guarantee to capture attention of the youth. This will incorporate platforms such as bloc chain trading.
- Exploitation of the media responsible use of the media with targeted messages for the masses backed with technical support will ensure the message is widely spread in a manner that will cause target audience to take action.

Exhibitions during the NEOAC

- Apart from launching of the NEOAS, some representative of farmers from the hub had a chance to display their agroecology products as well as sharing experience with other stakeholders including farmers and researchers.
- Farmer showcased the following items: local maize seeds, potatoes, cassava, animal manure mixed with charcoal, cowpeas, hyacinth beans and mug beans. Also, farmers displayed various organic spices including: cumin, cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, ginger, black pepper, lemon grass and ginger. Other displays were policy brief, brochure, poster and leaflets with project research findings information.



Dr. Suzan Nyanda, a researcher from the AEHT exchanging knowledge and information with the former Prime Minister Hon. Mizengo Peter Pinda on how students conduct research in collaboration with farmers with the Hub's facilitation.



Some of the produce and products exhibited by farmers



Farmers sharing knowledge and experiences with stakeholders



Researchers, academicians, students and farmers from the AEHT participated in the third NEOAC

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