

SLU news

Enhancing researchers' communication skills to improve policy engagement

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Group photo from the workshop. Photo: Billy Ipara, University of Nairobi.

The role of agriculture in ending poverty and hunger has been recognised in many agricultural development initiatives yet identifying and implementing enabling policies and evaluating their impacts remain a challenge to the development of the sector. Scientists and researchers not only have an important role to play in informing and influencing policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, but also informing those affected by the policies.

In this regard, AgriFoSe2030 developed a policy mentoring programme which focuses on training young scientists at universities and research institutes in East Africa. This is to contribute to efforts to address the human resource capacity challenge by building the capacity of recent PhD graduates to undertake policy relevant research and analysis and disseminate their work to the policy making community in support of agriculture and food and nutrition security in the included countries.

The policy mentoring programme is an 8-month training programme which was developed together with Regional Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support System (ReSAKSS) Eastern and Central Africa Node, based at the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), Kenya during phase I. During phase II, the Project implementation is led by the University of Nairobi with support from ReSAKSS and ILRI. The programme is one of AgriFoSe2030's ways of developing strategic collaborations with select universities and institutions.

As part of the programme, a three-day policy mentorship workshop was organised in September by University of Nairobi convening scientists and PhD students from University of Nairobi, Kyambogo University, University of Eldoret, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science & Technology and Egerton University. The workshop discussions centered around capacity building for early career scientists on communicating agricultural, food and nutritional policies to practice in East Africa. The workshop was an opportunity for mentees and mentors from Cohort 1 to reflect on their experience and was an opportunity to induct the mentors and mentees for the Cohort 2, and provide them with the opportunity to interact with the participants from the earlier cohort.

In his opening remarks, Prof. Willis Kosura from the Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Nairobi, called on the mentees to work closely with policy makers and participate in policy dialogue forums to generally understand and inform policy-making processes. Dr. David Jakinda, Senior

Lecturer in the Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Nairobi and project leader for the '*Transformation of pastoral livelihoods in Kenya*' AgriFoSe2030 project under challenge 1 & 4, stated that mentorship is about expanding and exposing professional networks to mentees.

David Ombalo, a Policy Analyst from the Kenya Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, spoke to making policy planning relevant to local planning and urged participants to understand the policy making process.

At the workshop, cohort 2 mentors and mentees had a chance to interact and agree of their ways of working that would make the mentoring programme efficient. Additionally, select mentees from cohort 1 showcased their policy briefs, their experiences, and their learnings.

Also present at the workshop was Prof. Magnus Jirström from Lund University and AgriFoSe2030 challenge 4 leader, and Ng'endo Machua-Muniu from the Stockholm Environment Institute who is AgriFoSe2030's acting Communications & Engagement Lead.

Facts:

Welcome to AgriFoSe2030!

The AgriFoSe2030 programme targets the UN Sustainable Development Goal 2 - "End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture" in low-income countries. We synthesise and translate existing science into policy and practice, and develop capacity to achieve this.

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