



Learning together in East Africa

Decentralising South

ICRA's new 'global partnership' strategy focuses on building long-term relationships with organisations in both the South and the North. For example, in Uganda we are working to foster collaboration between a national research partner, a university and ICRA, an association that has great potential for addressing both national and regional capacity building needs.

Refocusing agricultural research in Uganda

The Ugandan Government has recently introduced far-reaching policy changes that aim to modernise agriculture and promote sustainable economic development. These demand change in the national agricultural research system, which needs to become more market-responsive, client-oriented and demand-driven. Uganda's National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO) is starting to adapt and adjust in its efforts to better address the problems of the rural poor. This includes enhancing the ability of its staff to conduct interdisciplinary research in partnership with other stakeholders and to adopt a broader outlook in their work. Makerere University has also begun to develop its staff capacity and promote change in its curricula. Located in Kampala, it is the country's principal agricultural university and its graduates are often recruited by NARO and other organisations concerned with poverty reduction and sustainable development.

aims to satisfy the immediate needs of NARO while at the same time exposing Makerere staff to alternative learning approaches using IAR4D. This, in turn, should help increase the relevance of the university's curricula to employers in the rural development sector. By introducing new ways of working, the initiative will help research staff, farmers and other stakeholders to work together to tackle the complex problems of sustainable rural development through R&D strategies that are market-responsive, demand-driven and client-oriented.



Building capacity through collaboration

ICRA is consequently working closely with Makerere University and NARO in support of these change processes. The work includes enhancing the capacity of teams at both institutions to apply Integrated Agricultural Research for Development (IAR4D) approaches. The three organisations have introduced a collaborative programme that

Spreading the benefits

The work in Uganda will provide an example of how institutional change and development can be enhanced through capacity building in IAR4D – an example that may serve to guide similar programmes in neighbouring Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania. Projects and

The NARO–Makerere–ICRA Collaborative Initiative

The initiative is managed by a steering committee with members from all three collaborating organisations and ASARECA. The initial learning cycle of the first phase comprises a series of residential learning modules interspersed with field studies conducted as part of ongoing work to address a high-priority problem of rural development. The second phase is one of consolidation, mainstreaming and follow-up, where knowledge and lessons learned from the first phase can be applied to overall institutional change within NARO and to the educational programmes of Makerere. The third phase will focus on creating networks and expanding the initiative into the sub-region.

Jaap Kampen, consultant on a World Bank progress review of the Ugandan Agricultural Research and Training Project, was introduced to the NARO–Makerere–ICRA Collaborative Initiative on a recent review mission. He was very impressed by the concept. He writes: ‘I have been involved with agricultural research in eastern Africa for the last 15 years and I want to let you know that I was greatly impressed, both with the methodology and with the apparent impact – even at this early stage – on changing mindsets.’



programmes will be linked through a network with the help of the existing sub-regional organisation, the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in East and Central Africa (ASARECA). Links with such an organisation will help facilitate cross-location comparisons and learning, promote synergy and enable the individual programmes to share common approaches and resources.