

Report from the SIANI Expert Group on Restoration of Rural Landscapes for Food Security

A previous activity of the SIANI Expert Group was to engage local policy makers in the Triple L network in Kenya, see previous reports. At the Triple L annual workshop in 2015 the SIANI Expert Group again enabled the participation of West Pokot officials and policy makers (one representative presenting at the workshop) as well as their participation (three persons from the County Agricultural administration) in the workshop field trip to Baringo and Machakos. Both Baringo and Machakos has similar climate as the drier parts of West Pokot but with different population pressures. In Baringo, with low population pressures, partly different modes of enclosing farms for fodder production are used and hence valuable as a reference for both policy makers and scientists. In Machakos population pressures are now much higher, but were 30 years ago similar to West Pokot today. Hence an interesting development trajectory could be made, but although there are a lot of similarities, socio-economic and cultural differences have to be taken into account. Such development trajectories were discussed during the field tour and will be part of a scenario workshop between farmers, local NGO's, local policy makers and Triple L researchers next year. A report on the workshop, including the policy interaction (and the acknowledgement to the SIANI Expert Group contribution) will shortly be found at www.TripleL.se

The SIANI Expert Group on Restoration of Rural Landscapes for Food Security had the intention to find a forum for communication and interaction with “new-Swedes” from countries where degraded landscapes and their restoration is an issue. We considered these groups bringing valuable experience and knowledge to the scientific and developmental discourse and also as a potential resource for communicating research findings and developmental potentials back to respective countries of origin. In the “Agroforestry 2015” in Gothenburg 13-15th of November we found a forum for such communication. The expert group was active in the planning and preparations for this event and was represented by Anders Malmer and Madelene Ostwald at the meetings. It was organized by “Stadslandet Göteborg” and “Utveckling Nordost”. “Utveckling Nordost” is organised by a municipal company in cooperation with e.g. the local administrations in Angered and in Easter Gothenburg and Business Region Gothenburg. The meeting aimed at gathering interested stakeholders in local (agri)cultivation and food production in and around Gothenburg, partly on land that is not used today (partly degraded grazing and agricultural land). Another aim was to gather knowledge and engagement in local cultivation and restoration from the multi-cultural Gothenburg and that these activities should become means if integration. Two of the days were on site in Angered and Anders Malmer participated in different panels two days. The Agroforestry Congress had 176 participants and was considered a great success by the organisers, a summary in English can be found at <http://bit.ly/1P4VHOx>. Also from the perspective of the SIANI Expert Group it was successful in that the conference provided venue and opportunity to meet and communicate with stakeholders we rarely interact with, e.g. local Swedish administration and officials, engaged Swedish practitioners (enthusiasts) and immigrants with interest in agroforestry and restoration.

Although there was previous concerns about the possibility to distinguish the activities and work of the expert group from that of other networks (e.g. FOCALI and SLU Global), and we did show how the expert group would add value, it is important to point out that the work of the expert group is continuing in various other forums. Interactions and cooperation between the Triple L research network and policy makers in West Pokot County, Kenya, enabled by SIANI Expert Group funding and engagement, continues, and for 2016 there is a scenario workshop planned with development practitioners, local policy makers and officials, and Triple L researchers. Also restoration of degraded rural landscapes will remain high on the agenda in the newly formed AgriFoSe network, where some members of the expert group will be actively participating.