

## **IDS Holds a Workshop on Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F)**

Date and time:

Wed, 2013-08-14 10:36

Location / Venue:

Nairobi Safari Club



*Some of the participants during a workshop on the impacts of Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F) initiative in Kenya and Uganda. The event was hosted by the Institute for Development Studies (IDS) in collaboration with the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) at the Nairobi Safari Club on July 31, 2013.*

The Institute for Development Studies (IDS) in collaboration with the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) held a half-day workshop on the impacts of Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F) initiative in Kenya and Uganda. The event was held at the Nairobi Safari club on July 31, 2013. The workshop brought together stakeholders in areas of agriculture, community development, gender issues, youth and rural development drawn from the government, private sector and non-governmental organizations.

The main objectives of the workshop were to spread the L3F methodology to the various stakeholders and to disseminate the findings of the survey conducted to evaluate the implementation of the L3F initiative in Kenya and Uganda. The survey was commissioned by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) in 2012.

The L3F initiative is a response to a critical need arising from the fact that the wealth of information resulting from agricultural research and development often fail to reach the final consumers; the farmers who need it the most. Prof Winnie Mitullah, the IDS Director in her welcoming address said that the L3F approach which focuses on use of open and distance learning (ODL) supported by information and communication technologies (ICT) shows that technology can be used effectively to reach a large number of poor and marginalized people especially women. She commended COL's focus on dissemination and policy advocacy through such partnerships with IDS. She observed that it is in these two areas that most challenges lie, in the sense that, a lot of information exists but the challenge is in identifying whom to disseminate it to and how.

Prof. Asha Kanwar, the President and CEO of Commonwealth of Learning (COL) said that COL uses various technologies to accelerate progress towards achieving developmental goals. She observed that technology has an impact on training, for instance, open and distance learning (ODL) with the support of information and communication technologies (ICT) has a potential of delivering quality learning to a large number of people. She said that education leads to a greater freedom which enables people to be effective agents of development.

Ms. Anne Onyango, the Agriculture Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries who officially opened the workshop said that information access is a challenge in Kenya. Extension services in agriculture have dwindled. The ratio of extension officers to farmers is great therefore; a large number of farmers are not reached. "We therefore welcome innovations such as the L3F which will enable farmers to access information and farm more sustainably using the available resources as well as enable them handle the effects of climate change," said Ms. Onyango

The highlight of the day was the presentation by Prof. Rosemary Atieno, an Associate Research Professor at IDS. Prof Atieno presented the results of the evaluation survey of the L3F initiative implemented in Kenya and Uganda. COL has been working with Kenya Aid Intervention & Prevention Project Group (KAIPPG) and Ugunja Community Resource Centre (UCRC) in Kenya. KAIPPG and UCRC have been applying the L3F methodology in health and livelihoods programmes in Western Kenya. In Uganda, COL works with Makerere University in implementing the L3F initiative. The survey established that L3F initiative had effective impacts and outcomes in improving the livelihoods through economic diversification, nutrition and food security among the L3 communities. It also established that there was greater social empowerment in the form of social capital, networking and social mobility among the L3F participants compared to the non-participants. The survey further showed that there was greater use of ICT among the L3F participants in learning.

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