News

More than a thousand dryland voices will be heard

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During three weeks, a large household survey, including male and female respondents in 920 households, is carried out. The survey will try to capture the lives, choices and challenges faced by both pastoralists and agro-pastoralists in the Karamoja cluster in Uganda and Kenya. Both the husband and wife in a household will be interviewed to understand the intra-household dynamics, views and opportunities. The survey is being one of the research tools in the SLU-led Drylands Transform project.

Training of sixteen enumerators and four team leaders

A selection of project members from universities in Uganda, Kenya and Sweden met in Moroto town, Uganda to lead the training of enumerators and their team leaders in each site. The training covered both a common understanding of all questions and the possible answers; a section on how to handle and enter data in the survey gadgets and software as well as a practical training in how to measure and weigh mothers with a child aged 6 months-5 years. The training had specific time set

aside for feedback and sharing of experiences while translating and trying to understand what and how to ask.

Final test of survey tools

After four days of intensive training and preparations, the teams were finally ready to go to the field to try out the survey. All team members were eager to reach the field to see the survey come to life. There was also a lot of curiosity among people in the villages.

From the final field testing we learnt a lot of lessons that could be brought back for discussion. For example that it is good if the mother is measured before the child in order to make the child feel more confident to try as well. The equipment was also found to be bulky and heavy to carry all alone, especially when roads are more or less absent in some places. It was also noticed that some questions, especially sensitive ones, needed to be re-phrased or appear within a certain context for it to be easier to ask.

The measuring equipment was being demonstrated for and practised by enumerators. Photo: Ylva Nyberg

Enumerator and interviewee on their way to the homestead for the final test of survey tools. Photo: Ylva Nyberg

All enumerators and team leaders for the two Kenyan sites. Photo: Ylva Nyberg

All enumerators and team leaders for the two sites in Uganda. Photo: Ylva Nyberg

Invaluable support from local leaders

Overall the survey worked well and the estimated time to complete the survey within a household was according to the plan. The following last days were spent on enumerators giving feedback on the survey questions and the survey tools for corrections and refining of the survey and making sure the software was following smoothly. On Monday, the 30th of May, it was finally time for the survey to be launched. All four teams were now active within their respective sites. This day included planning and randomizing the households for selection of respondents. In this, the project had invaluable support from local village leaders to get access to the accurate village books of all inhabitants in order to enable the selection of households.

Linking land heath to human health

The whole Drylands Transform team is now eagerly seeing the first data being uploaded and looking forward to analyses both within and between project sites as well as analyses combining the household data with the Land Degradation Surveillance Framework (LDSF) data on soil and vegetation collected earlier. Linking land health and human health for drylands transformation addressing the UN sustainable development goals (SDGs) is the ultimate target for our transdisciplinary research team.

Facts:

Drylands Transform

Drylands Transform is a 4-year research project funded by Formas that started up during the Covid-19 pandemic in October 2020. It includes an interdisciplinary research team representing SLU and seven other universities and international organisations from Sweden, Kenya and Uganda.

Visit the website for Drylands Transform.