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# African farmers demonstrate the power of collective action to safeguard ecosystems through participatory video

African Ecosystem Services  
Partnership Conference:  
*Ecosystem Services for SDGs in  
Africa*

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# Outline

- Ecosystem Services context
- What is/Why use participatory video
- Case studies
- Power of the collective
- Indigenous knowledge for sustainable resource use
- Farmers' systems thinking to inspire cooperation



# Agroecosystem Context

- Small-holder farmers in Ghana, Tanzania, Malawi, Kenya face various interconnected ecosystem degradation challenges:
  - soil erosion, loss of soil fertility, deforestation, decreasing water availability
- These negatively impact their food security and livelihoods
- Participatory Videos provides farmers a voice to explore opportunities to address these challenges as a group
- Farmers demonstrate the dynamics of various ecosystem services in the landscape



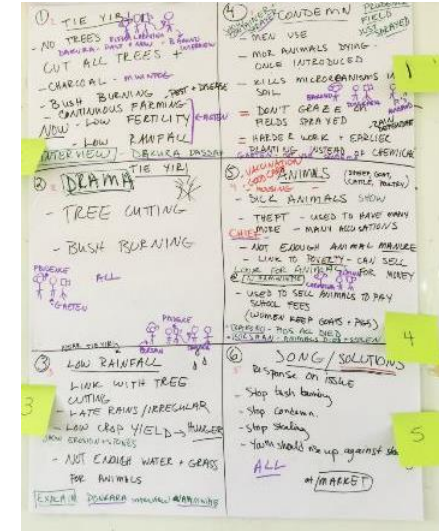
# Participatory Video

- How do you give a voice to those who often are not heard?
- Handing over a video camera and equipment leads to learning on many levels
- Facilitates true bottom-up participation in the research process
- Reveals group power dynamics
- Helps identify opportunities for group action



# CIAT Participatory video process

- Through a 6 day process farmers:
  - Learn video techniques
  - Practice interviewing skills
  - Support each other to learn together
  - Distil the messages they want to share
  - Develop, film, and edit their story
  - Choose audience: their community, local leaders, and the world
  - Inform fellow community members about important ecosystem and agricultural issues



# Five Participatory Video case studies

- Facilitated with local partners in Ghana, Kenya, Malawi and Tanzania
- Across different community and agroecological contexts
- Analyzed videos, interviews, observations, and discussion during and after the video production

**"Ti Na Nyang"**  
**"We Can"**  
Welcome to Nabdam, Upper East Region, Ghana.

Let's Conserve the Environment  
by Finding Solutions to  
End Poverty  
Tisamale Chilengedwe Popeza  
Njira Zothetsera Umphawi

**TA SAANA A TENGAN**  
**"DON'T DESTROY THE  
ENVIRONMENT"**

**MAZINGIRA  
NI UHAI**  
**THE ENVIRONMENT  
IS LIFE**

**Farming  
Challenges in  
North Alego,  
Kenya**

# Power of the group



- Participatory Video is a group learning process
- Messages for individual farmers to take up sustainable land management across the landscape
- Participants called for improving governance and enforcement of by-laws

“I urge participants and community members to take part in environmental conservation and gather even more people to see the video...” Group Village Head Champiti , Malawi during video screening discussion

- Call for various forms of group action to address ecosystem management challenges and food insecurity:
  - Farming groups
  - Community tree planting initiatives
  - Youth conservation groups
  - Community by-law enforcement (bush burning, tree planting, tree cutting)
  - Join forces to protect valuable tree species and manage animal theft
  - Holding each other accountable

“Landlords, chiefs, and youth, rise up to fight and save the land”





# Indigenous knowledge for sustainable resource use

- Myriad of examples include:
  - Method of building stone bunds
  - Manure management with a limited supply
  - Tree species' multiple uses and benefits
  - Incorporating local manure and trees that attract goats to fertilize the field with their droppings



## Local knowledge of the multiple benefits of trees



# Farmers' systems thinking

- Farmers demonstrate their systems thinking at multiple levels
  - Farming system level: interconnectedness of farming activities
  - Landscape system level: farm activities impact the wider environment
- Poverty forces people to interact with their resources unsustainably



# Farm level system from a farmers' perspective



## Livestock feed and manure

- Important for food and income
- Crop residues, grasses, grazing
  - Manure & compost management



## Trees on farms

- Trees to feed/attract livestock
  - Trees for fruits, nuts, oils
- Trees for construction, firewood
- Trees/tree products for income



## Soil fertility and health



- Terraces, stone bunds, grass strips against erosion
- Manure, Compost, legumes



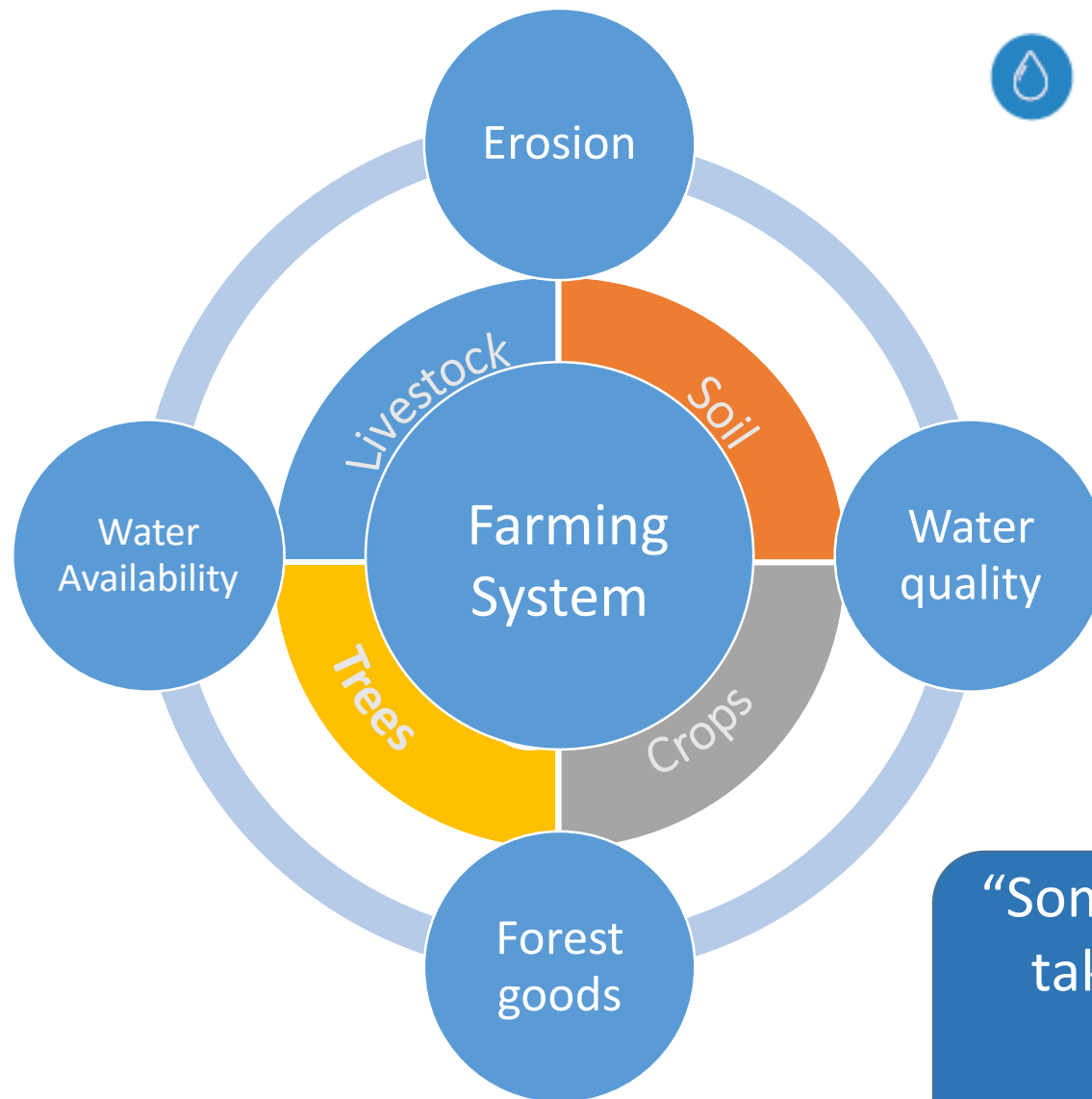
## Crop productivity

- Yields for food and income
- Residues for livestock and soil
- Continuous cropping



**I also have a procedure of preserving manure to add nutrients to my farm.**

# Landscape system: farm activities impact the environment



## Farmers Identify

### Upstream & Downstream Relationships

- Unsustainable activities lead to:
  - Lack of water upstream
  - Flooding downstream
- Impacts crop, forest, livestock productivity
- *Terraces, stone bunds, grass strips, trees on farm can help*

“Some choose not to cooperate and they are not taking responsibility upstream for the effects downstream”

Farmer in Malawi

# Conclusions

- These participatory videos reveal the importance of indigenous knowledge for sustainable resource use
- Farmers demonstrate their systems thinking and understanding of how farm activities impact the environment
- Farmers hope their videos can serve to inspire the necessary cooperation and individual action toward safeguarding ecosystems and food security



# Thank you, Asante, Zikomo



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RESEARCH  
PROGRAM ON  
Water, Land and  
Ecosystems



# Videos and links

- You Tube links of Participatory Videos

- "Ti Na Nyang" – "We Can" Upper East Ghana: <https://youtu.be/8hw4ytnCU6A>
- "Let's conserve the environment by finding solutions to end poverty" Ntcheu district Malawi: [https://youtu.be/0EZD5lv\\_xAQ](https://youtu.be/0EZD5lv_xAQ)
- "Farming challenges in North Alego, Kenya":  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QTUUP6RYWSQ&feature=youtu.be>
- "Don't Destroy the Environment" Upper West, Ghana:  
<https://youtu.be/RrZQt3dHJoA>
- "The Environment is Life" Lushoto, Tanzania:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Erjbnr15jY&feature=youtu.be>

- Blogs about Participatory Video Process

- <http://blog.ciat.cgiar.org/farmers-film-their-homegrown-solutions/>
- <http://blog.ciat.cgiar.org/filming-for-change-when-farmers-get-behind-the-camera/>
- <http://blog.ciat.cgiar.org/farmers-become-editors-what-next/>
- <http://insightshare.tumblr.com/post/142631656625/farmers-film-their-homegrown-solutions>