

AGRO ECOLOGY & AGROBIODIVERSITY TRAINING COURSE 2022

14TH AUGUST- 9TH SEPTEMBER 2022



The **Agroecology and Agrobiodiversity Training Course (AATC)** is a **4.5 weeks** training course that exposes university students to the fundamentals of agroecology and agrobiodiversity (AA). It develops an in-depth understanding of the challenges of current food systems and the application of the principles and practices of agroecology among students working with practitioners, researchers, policymakers, and other actors in the agriculture sector. The course borrows from and builds on the International Training Course on Organic Agriculture (ITCOA), which has built a network of alumni from different Universities in 4 Countries of focus – Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Ethiopia. Overall, partnerships have involved the University of Nairobi with four other Universities -Makerere University Kampala, Uganda Martyrs University, Sokoine University of Agriculture, and Bahir Dar University. The partnership has been based on mutual selection and nomination of students plus in-country and on-the-ground facilitators. With the advent of COVID-19, conducting the course with all partners centrally placed becomes a challenge. In 2020, it became necessary for each partner university to conduct the course in their home country, hence the introduction of AATC held in Kenya for the first time in August 2021.

The training kicked off from **14th August to 9th September 2022** at the department of Land Resource Management and Agricultural Technology (LARMAT), University of Nairobi under

guidance of project coordinator, and the chairman of LARMAT, Prof. Richard Onwonga. This training is a follow-up of AATC 2021 and is conducted through an e-learning platform, face-to-face sessions, and fieldwork. The fieldwork involves practical and experiential learning of different agro ecological principles and practices. This process is under the guidance of selected practitioners in the agro ecology value chain these are Prof. Richard Onwonga ,(Chairman, LARMAT), Dr. Janeth Chepkemoi (UoN), Noel Templer (Nutriproduce), Dr. Martin Oulu (ISFA), Dr. Robert Mbeche(JKUAT), Dr. Anne Sitienei(University of Kabianga), Dr. Jonah Ngeno (University of Eldoret), Felix Odhiambo (Nutriproduce). The participants participated in field activities as well as synthesis of ideas on a poster Presentation. In an endeavor to create a community of practice (CoP) around training on AA, and other nature-based solutions to transforming agri-food systems, AATC 2022 has expanded its range of partners. These partners have co-created and co-implemented the AATC with collaborative Universities, vis-a-vis **Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT), University of Eldoret (UoE), University of Kabianga, and South Eastern Kenya University (SEKU)**. It seeks to strategically contribute to the value system of AA and Ecological organic agriculture (EOA) in agricultural policy and practice in Kenya. Additionally, this value is aimed at influencing a mindset shift in university students towards the tenets and principles of AA.

The **intended learning outcomes** of the training course were:

- i) An integrated/holistic understanding of food systems based on agroecology/agrobiodiversity principles and practices developed at a cohort of agriculture-related academia alumni with a clear vision for their personal development to contribute to an agro ecological transformation.
- ii) A community of practice established, assuring a long-term implementation of AATC and impetus for similar and excellence in AA training and
- iii) Catalytic relations and powerful initiatives developed through a well-coordinated network of alumni.

A total of **50 participants** actively participated with **38 students** drawn from east African universities. The University of Nairobi, Faculty of Agriculture and Vet Medicine, 11 BSC students pursuing environmental science discipline course were trained with two from host department, LARMAT.