Drynet Update

As our Drynet project financed by SDC comes to an end, the Drynet network is more alive than ever. Our presence during the UNCCD COP11 in Namibia in September was well noted and covered by the Namibian media, for example on the frontpage of the Allgemeine Zeitung – see the picture below. What we achieved in Windhoek can be read on the following pages.

Furthermore, an important change for the network happened this year, in the form of a new development in the governance structure of the network. This will enable the network to continue to exist also beyond project financing. More about it in this newsletter.

As for the other articles, this newsletter offers interesting insights on land use planning from Kalimantan, Indonesia, which might also be applicable in drylands, and research results on the impact on household level of natural regeneration in Burkina Faso.

From 2014 onwards there will no longer be a specific Drynet newsletter for the European region by the European Drynet partners, but one Drynet newsletter made by the network coordinator in Turkey (TEMA). We will keep you updated on the developments in drylands and the activities by the Drynet network through this new newsletter.

DRYNET members featuring on the frontpage of the Namibian newspaper Allgemeine Zeitung
Picture by: Both ENDS
International Agenda 2014

2014: International Year of Family Farming
The 2014 International Year of Family Farming (IYFF) aims to raise the profile of family farming and smallholder farming by focusing world attention on its significant role in eradicating hunger and poverty, providing food security and nutrition, improving livelihoods, managing natural resources, protecting the environment, and achieving sustainable development, in particular in rural areas. The European Commission has already kicked off this year with a Conference “Family farming: A dialogue towards more sustainable and resilient farming in Europe and the world” (Brussels, 29 November 2013). The conference drew attention to the important role of family farming, the key challenges and priorities for the future, as well as address the best means of supporting family farms. The conference outcome will contribute to the FAO European Regional Conference (ERC) scheduled for 1-4 April 2014 in Bucharest, Romania, and to events related to family farming that will be organised in the course of 2014.


31 March – 3 February • 2014
2014 World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty in Washington D.C., USA
This 15th annual Conference on Land and Poverty will address the theme, ‘Integrating Land Governance into the Post-2015 Agenda: Harnessing Synergies for Implementation and Monitoring Impact,’ and echo other global conferences that have featured discussions about making land tenure and property rights a central theme of a global post-2015 development agenda. The Conference will consider the thematic areas of: securing and protecting land rights from a gender perspective; managing urban landscapes; attracting responsible land-based investment for local benefits and common resource management; maximizing benefits from spatial data; strengthening country level institutions; fostering transparency in land ownership, use and administration; and research on key aspects of land governance.

17 June • 2014
2014 World Day to Combat Desertification, worldwide:
The Secretariat of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) has selected a focus of ecosystem-based adaptation and a slogan of ‘Land belongs to the future, let’s climate proof it!’ for the 2014 events to mark the 2014 World Day to Combat Desertification.

Monique Barbut of France appointed as UNCCD Executive Secretary
Former CEO and Chairperson of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) from 2006-2012, Barbut replaces Luc Gnacadja of Benin, whose second three-year term as Executive Secretary of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) concluded on 30 September 2013. Barbut will be the third Executive Secretary since the Convention entered into force in 1996. Prior to her position at the GEF, Barbut served as Director of the Division of Technology, Industry and Economics of the UN Environment Program (UNEP), from 2003 to 2006.

News from Drynet
A global initiative giving future to drylands

Congratulating Drynet

By DRYNET partner Marie José van der Werff ten Bosch of Both ENDS
The Netherlands

Drynet started in 2007 as a 3-year networking and capacity building project that aimed to strengthen the voices of local dryland communities through their organisations, and financed by the European Union with co-finance from Global Mechanism, the Dutch government and PSO. The project had 14 partner organisations working together, and being one of the initiators Both ENDS was appointed as project manager, supported by a Steering Committee of 5 partners. In 2011 the Swiss SDC provided substantial finance for a 3-year follow-up project. By then, Drynet partners agreed that their network was no longer an occasional network formed to support the implementation of a joint project, but a collaboration that would last beyond a project framework. Both ENDS had developed into a network coordinator as well as a project manager. This called for a change in the governance structure of the network, in order to separate the network as such and the joint project(s) the members were implementing.

In 2013 important steps have been taken to ensure the functioning of the Drynet network in the future. Drynet members have reviewed the governance structure of the network, its fundraising capacities, what Drynet has achieved so far and what are its ambitions for the future. In February 2013, during its annual meeting in Istanbul, a new Board was elected, and in the following months a new Network Coordinator. Right before the COP11 in September Namibia, the Steering Committee met with the newly elected Coordinator and Board members to finalise this transition process.

This transition has made Drynet a stronger, more sustainable network of engaged members speaking up for often marginalised communities in drylands, where people have to deal daily with drought, degradation and lack of food. The coordination is now in the hands of The TEMA Foundation Turkey, an organisation working on soil erosion, deforestation and other issues in the drylands of Turkey for more than 20 years now. The new Board, chaired by CARI France, no longer includes Both ENDS, in order to be able to better separate the network and the project implementation. With the newly developed roles and responsibilities of the Coordinator and the Board the network will remain functional with a minimum of coordination costs and services, also if there are no project funds available. Furthermore, the members committed to contributing a membership fee in order to maintain the coordination services, showing their commitment and the added value they see in being a member of Drynet.

Both ENDS, CARI and DCG would like to congratulate Drynet with this important step, and wish the network a sustainable, inspirational and successful future!

Furthermore, Drynet would like to thank all (financial) partners who have, in the course of the years, contributed to this network and its mission in drylands.
DRYNET at UNCCD COP 11 in Windhoek, Namibia

By DRYNET partner Noel Oetle of EMG South Africa and Marie José van der Werff ten Bosch of Both ENDS The Netherlands

The eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP 11) opened on Monday afternoon, 16 September 2013, in Windhoek, Namibia. Attended by government delegates from all over the world, the COP also hosted civil society delegates. The DRYNET network had a strong presence in Windhoek, the 11 members attending the COP (co)organised several side events, the 2 Open Dialogue Sessions (plenary sessions led by CSOs), and made several interventions from the floor during plenary sessions.

Over the years, DRYNET has advocated time and again for improved procedures for the effective participation of CSOs in the COP negotiations. COP 9 saw an improvement in procedures. COP10 called for a differentiation between CSO-observers from different countries, which was a step backwards. It was decided that only CSOs from the annex countries could be part of the selection panel, whose task it is to select CSO candidates whose participation in UNCCD Conferences is sponsored through the UNCCD Secretariat. Drynet and partners have called for inclusion of representatives of organisations from countries of each regional and interest group of the United Nations, so as not to make a distinction between CSOs, in a statement in the Plenary Hall. This lobby has been effective and revised procedures (again) are on the agenda for next COP.

A second issue that concerned us was the observer status that the global agribusiness company Syngenta has received from the Parties in Windhoek (see article elsewhere in this newsletter). Drynet and partners made a statement in Windhoek asking for better assessment criteria for private sector entities to obtain observer status.

This has resulted in a decision L12 that requests the UNCCD secretariat and the Global Mechanism to develop a business engagement strategy outlining the objectives, modalities and conditions of UNCCD partnerships with business and private entities. DRYNET will continue to monitor the development of this strategy to ensure criteria of sustainability now and in the future will feature in it.

Drynet and WOCAT: creating synergies

By DRYNET partner Noel Oetle of EMG South Africa and Marie José van der Werff ten Bosch of Both ENDS The Netherlands

The World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) is an international network that, over the past 20 years, has created the most comprehensive database of proven technologies and approaches for sustainable land management in the world.

Drynet and WOCAT share a common vision that Sustainable Land Management in drylands can only be achieved when local organisations and communities living in drylands are at the centre of SLM efforts, and have access to appropriate technologies, advice and other necessary resources. Our joint goal is to provide a supportive framework for local stakeholders as well as decision makers to select priority areas for SLM interventions and enabling local stakeholders to participate meaningfully in resource management.

WOCAT’s strengths include documenting SLM technologies and approaches with scientific validation, building capacities of scientists, local technicians and local government institutions. Drynet is able to merge information flows, create space for local land users to negotiate and support local land users to take that space.

The two networks work complementarily and are seeking closer cooperation in the areas of:

1. SLM knowledge management and decision support
2. Capacity development and community empowerment
3. Advocacy and negotiation in order to create a more enabling environment
Together with the WOCAT network DRYNET co-organised two side events on Sustainable Land Management (SLM) and knowledge management, showing the complementarity between the two networks and their ability to support decision-making for land users as well as land use planners. On Thursday 19th September a workshop explored how effective partnerships can be built between various stakeholders such as researchers, civil society groups and policy makers in order to support sound practice and effective policies for sustainable land management, development and livelihoods of dryland communities. The workshop presented a case study from Drynet partner CAREC in Central Asia, and demonstrated how the WOCAT SLM best practices knowledge base could be used for decision support. Participants were invited to participate in a role play and a simulation exercise to select the best suited methodologies for the described situation.

A Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing? Agribusiness and the UNCCD

By Drynet partner Noel Oettle of EMG South Africa

On Friday 20th the first-ever civil society protest took place within the precincts of a UNCCD COP to express dissatisfaction with the decision of the COP to grant observer status to Syngenta, thus allowing the agribusiness giant to participate in the debates of the Convention. What is the background to this protest?

As with the other UN Environmental Conventions, the private sector has been promoted as a panacea to speeding up the hitherto slow progress with implementing the UNCCD. However, it is well known that some private sector entities have been responsible for the destruction of vast areas of productive land by practices such as strip mining, irresponsible disposal of toxic waste and manufacture and distribution of technologies that have destroyed biodiversity and disproportionally contributed to global warming.

Civil society supports granting observer status to private sector actors in the UNCCD, and recognises that the private sector controls vast resources of intellectual capital, research capacity, organisational capacity and finance that could be better deployed in the global task of advancing sustainable land management and achieving the Rio +20 goal of zero land degradation. However, civil society also recognises that the private sector is primarily motivated by profit, and that not all private sector actors place priority on the sustainability of resource use and the advancement of the livelihoods of the rural poor.

“Green-washing” is a common public relations strategy to persuade the public and policy makers that companies are part of the solution to environmental problems, and agri-business companies spend a great deal of money promoting their “green” image. In this regard the bone fides of companies such as Syngenta must be scrutinised, and the impact of their business practices closely examined to assess to what extent they are mitigating land degradation and rural poverty, and to what extent they are contributing to it.

The Convention seeks to mitigate the effects of land degradation on people and their livelihoods. Technologies such as genetic modification of plant material have been shown to have...
a number of negative effects on the sustainability of small farm enterprises, and on the environment. Technology packages promoted by agri-business bind producers to purchasing seed and inputs from the company, and undermine seed sovereignty and local plant husbandry. As Syngenta expresses it on their website (http://www.syngenta.com/country/za/en/crops-and-products/key-crops/Pages/Maize.aspx), “hybridization over many years has allowed enormous productivity gains, and this has been complemented in the last decade by the development of biotech traits in North America, Latin America, Asia and South Africa. To safeguard their substantial investment in new traits, growers need a range of solutions to protect their crop from weeds, insects and environmental stress.”

This ‘safeguarding’ of crops implies that farmers must purchase not only seed, but also fertiliser, herbicides, fungicides and insecticides from the company, all of which have negative impacts on people and the environment. It is naïve to ascribe “sustainability” to this approach, and irresponsible to assume that these technology packages do not lead to land and environmental degradation.

Civil society organisations argue that the ethics and the impact of the technologies that are promoted by agribusiness (and indeed any other private sector company) should be carefully and transparently examined before they are admitted to become observers to the Convention. If not, they will certainly use their status to promote these technologies via the UNCCD, with potentially disastrous results for affected populations. This could be achieved by requiring all private sector organisations that seek, or wish to retain observer status to the UNCCD to demonstrate a clear and transparent commitment to advancing sustainable development. To this end, clear criteria must be drawn up, a Review Committee should be established, a transparent process of vetting applicants should be put in place, and annual reports reflecting the contribution of private sector entities to achieving the strategic objectives of the UNCCD’s 10 year strategy. Practically, this could include:

- Providing opportunity for Parties and other accredited observers to submit arguments as to why private sector applicants should, or should not be admitted to the Convention;
- Allowing private sector applicants to respond to these arguments;
- Publication of the summary findings of the Review Committee; and
- Review of annual reports of all private sector observers.

If the Parties fail to put these measures in place, the Convention could become a market place for technologies that undermine the very purpose of the UNCCD.
Experiences of Participatory Land-Use Planning (PLUP) in Indonesia

By DRYNET partner Leonie Wezendonk of Both ENDS The Netherlands

When it comes to land right issues, spatial planning and matters of conflicts and marginalisation, some happenings and solutions do not differ so much between arid and humid regions. Lessons learned in Indonesia might also be applicable in dryland settings. The below summary about Kalimantan, Indonesia provides useful insights for everyone working in the field of sustainable land management.

In the recent past, large-scale expansion of palm oil plantations in Indonesia has often violated local customary land rights, leading to conflicts between communities and companies. In order to prevent such conflicts, proper site identification of oil palm plantations is crucial. Current land-use planning in Indonesia is based on formal maps that make no mention of customary and village boundaries. This makes communities vulnerable, as oil palm companies may expand their plantations on (state-owned?) community land without the consent of the local people who use this land. Participatory land-use planning (PLUP) can help address this. PLUP refers to a type of land-use planning that is people-centred and bottom-up, incorporates input from all relevant stakeholders and recognizes locally specific socio-cultural, economic and environmental conditions (see, e.g. Wehrmann, 2011). It has the potential to prevent land-use conflicts and land grabbing. This is particularly important in places where land is contested and customary land rights are not legally formalised. Between 2010 and 2013, an alliance of Indonesian and Dutch non-governmental organisations and universities and an international research institution conducted a PLUP pilot project in West Kalimantan, Indonesia.

Considering the complexity of issues related to land regulation and planning in West Kalimantan the project consortium first conducted an assessment study. The national and province level legal context, experiences with participatory land-use planning in Indonesia and constraints and opportunities to get community maps accepted by the district government were assessed. The team concluded that the window of opportunity for PLUP was the revised spatial planning law which introduces ‘Rural Areas’ as a new category. The classification as a Rural Area implies that the area is considered as being crucial for the local community and can therefore not be used by private companies to establish plantations. The law states that the Rural Area is to be identified through a process of detailed spatial planning. So far there is no practical experience with detailed spatial planning and the identification of Rural Areas, as they are new concepts in the spatial planning process. Furthermore, there is as yet no regulation that sets out guidelines on how to carry out detailed spatial planning to identify Rural Areas. Community mapping could play a crucial role in this identification process. This became the starting point for the consortium’s interventions: Aim at integrating community maps in spatial planning procedures (starting with existing community maps) and seek collaboration with the district’s planning agency to facilitate the use of existing community maps for detailed spatial planning. The following activities were started in one district in West Kalimantan:

- Send policy memo’s to district government about need for PLUP
- Village workshops and discussions about new Rural Areas category and PLUP
- Discussions and workshops with district government making an informal map that integrates community maps in official spatial planning maps, showing overlaps
- Multi-stakeholder workshops between villagers and government, creating trust and mutual understanding
- Input in district government draft spatial planning law
Through these activities, the PLUP project successfully put participatory land-use planning and community mapping on the agenda of the district government. Also, through the project’s activities, the relationship between local NGOs and the local government’s spatial planning agency has improved significantly. The project had several concrete results, one of them is that the PLUP consortium managed to include a new paragraph in the draft spatial planning regulation, which explains the Rural Area classification and enables the district’s governor to legalise Rural Areas through a simple legal procedure (Perbu). This procedure though depends on the willingness of the person holding office to put effort in classifying Rural Areas as there is no officially signed document that demands the commitment of future office holders.

Many lessons can be learned from this project:

• National guidelines. In Indonesia, detailed spatial planning provides an opportunity to safeguard local interests. Considering the lack of clear national guidelines and the variety between districts, there is a need to communicate local-level experience with detailed spatial planning to the national level, where regulations can be made to guide implementation in other districts.

• Political will. In the absence of clear regulations and guidelines, efforts to integrate community maps in formal planning procedures are highly dependent on the willingness of the planning agency and district leaders to collaborate. When the relationship is good, a lot is possible. This was the case in Sanggau, where the vice-governor had worked with a local NGO in the past and was supportive to the community mapping movement. The situation may change when a new person enters office. This underlines the need for clear national regulation and guidelines.

• Relationships of trust. As political will is important, it is crucial for local NGOs to invest in good working relationships with local government officials. The same goes for the relationship between NGOs and the private sector.

• Endurance. In a political and legal context that is unpredictable, NGOs may easily lose their trust in cooperation with the government. The experience in this pilot project, however, shows that it is worthwhile to invest in longer-term relationships with government actors. Influencing policy is a matter of long breath and patience.

• Involvement of academics. In the process of building trust and alliances with the local government and the private sector, it is important to create an environment in which the different stakeholders are encouraged to enter into an open and constructive discussion with each other. Involving academics as ‘neutral’ actors can help in this process.

• Timing. Making spatial planning more inclusive requires a political and legal window of opportunity. Civil society organisations therefore need to stay informed and updated about national, provincial and district policies and need to time their interventions carefully.

Synthesis based on the paper “Formalising participatory land-use planning - Experiences from Sanggau District, West Kalimantan, Indonesia” written by a consortium of Dutch and Indonesian NGOs and research institutes. It can be downloaded from www.bothends.org. Also available are manuals on Participatory Land Use Planning from Kalimantan and Laos.
Revenues of Assisted Natural Regeneration (RNA) in Burkina Faso

By DRYNET partner Martien Hoogland of Both ENDS The Netherlands

Assisted Natural Regeneration (RNA) has in the past decade gained increasing attention as an agricultural approach to improve soil fertility and increase yields of cereals, tree products and animal fodder in Sub Saharan Africa. However, practitioners are less able to quantify the contribution of RNA to the household revenues due the immense variety of products and the small volumes produced. The method of surveying a large number of households only provided limited insight in the impact of RNA. Therefore Both ENDS and its partners SahelEco (Mali), newTree (Burkina Faso) and CRESA (Niger) used a unique approach in which a small number of households were followed during a whole growing season (2011/2012). This article presents the first results of the survey for quantitative data in Burkina Faso.

RNA developed out of the crisis that hit the Sahel countries in the 1970-ties. This crisis was in the first place a crisis in availability of food, but on closer observation also proved to be a crisis in the management of the ecosystem. Decades of degradation of the natural environment had depleted the soil fertility and the availability of animal fodder. Widespread planting of trees did not have the expected impact (many trees died despite heavy labour input), so that communities finally reverted to traditional agricultural approaches. They started to protect multipurpose indigenous seedlings that germinate spontaneously from the still available seed bank and root systems in the soils. This approach was pioneered in the Zinder area of Niger, without any interference of government and NGO’s. With remarkable results: vast expanses of savannah devoid of vegetation in the early 1980s are now densely studded by trees, shrubs, and crops.

NewTree started working in 2003 in the Centre of Burkina Faso, near the capital of Ouagadougou, and faced an extra challenge. The ecosystem was in a severe crisis due to pressure of a heavy urban demand for fire wood, while traditional village institutions were eroded. Therefore NewTree opted for enclosing forest gardens (3 hectares) managed by individual farmers that cultivated more than average amount of land (15 hectares mean). The study revealed the potential of the method of enclosed regeneration to escape from the vicious cycle of degradation and poverty. Especially the contribution of RNA to availability of biomass and animal fodder proved to be important. The study also made it possible to follow the development of five farms over a longer time period.

One farmer was followed from the year 2000 on. Previously, despite the fact that he cultivated as much as 12 hectares of land he only succeeded to cultivate enough cereals (sorghum, millet) to feed his family for just 6 months per year. He kept a small stock of cattle, but every year he was forced to sell against bottom prices in the dry season due to lack of animal fodder. To escape poverty
he needed to complement his income by working as a macon in construction work. In 2000 he constructed a compost pit that assisted him to raise the yields on his fields, although the lack of biomass limited the volume of compost available (in other areas of Burkina Faso farmers were even paid to assist the composting). The turn around in farm management came in 2008 when he constructed an enclosure that enabled him to build two additional pits, while the fodder yields from the enclosure enabled him to start stabling his cattle in the dry period. In 2013 his cereal stock in his granary was sufficient to feed his family for 15 months, while another farmer in the study even recorded a period of 20 months.

The study also revealed that the introduction of composting and stabling on the farms is not gender neutral, to say the least. Both activities are time consuming and increase the labour burden of the female members of the household. Composting needs transport of biomass to the pit, watering of the pit and eventually transport of the finished compost to the fields. Stabling of animals needs clearing of the stables and the watering of animals. In all these tasks women are heavily involved. Women were also asked to harvest fodder tree crops like *Piliostigma* and *Daniellia*. This is an issue as the male head of the household controls both the granary (stocking place for cereals) as the revenues out of sale of all animals (even the chicken). It must be observed that although the food security of the households under study improved fundamentally, women also seem to have lost control over their labour time. This is the more serious as there appears to be competition between cereal cultivation and karite (shea butter\(^1\) ) harvesting as both take place in the same season. Women are forced to harvest the karite fruits in very early morning, while they had to weed the cereals later in the morning. Women would also chose for different trees in the enclosure as their husbands and do prefer to have their own enclosure, but this hardly happens as the males do not allow this. This gender dilemma needs attention.

\(^1\) an off-white or ivory-colored fat extracted from the nut of the African shea tree (*Vitellaria paradoxa)*