

## Innovating for and with the communities in the Mt. Elgon Region, Uganda

### *Dissemination of results from the Deliberative Polling® exercise*

It is not enough to engage the communities, consult them on various issues, write reports/books, individuals attain degrees and stop at that. Makerere University School of Public Health ResilientAfrica Network (RAN) reached out to the Mt. Elgon region communities (Butalejja and Bududa districts) to establish the real life challenges in these communities to inform development of solutions through innovation. Here is an opportunity to hear back from the community- Deliberative Polling® (DP) <http://cdd.stanford.edu> results dissemination. The DP results were disseminated to the community and Bududa and Butalejja district officials in Mbale on January 21 and to policy makers, Government civil servants, academicians and the RAN team in Kampala on January 23, 2015.

July, 2014 marked yet another milestone for Makerere University School of Public Health ResilientAfrica Network (RAN) [www.ranlab.org](http://www.ranlab.org). The Eastern Africa Resilience Innovation Lab with support from USAID, conducted the first “Deliberative Polls” in Africa with the aim of informing innovations to strengthen resilience in target communities. Over 70 Deliberative Polls have been conducted in 20 countries around the world. But these two DPs, one in Butalejja and the other in Bududa district were the first in Africa.

The Deliberative Polling® (DP) Approach is a citizen-based data generation method that seeks to contribute to the process of developing interventions that respond to the felt needs of the community-providing solutions through innovation. Deliberative Polling is a unique approach of consulting communities through a representative sample on key policy issues. Described as the gold standard for consulting the community on development issues, DP is based on the principle that when people have accurate and comprehensive information, they reach informed decisions and make qualitative contributions to policy and programs. According to Prof. James Fishkin of the Center for Deliberative Democracy at Stanford University, who is also the architect of Deliberative Polling®, the focus of DP is **“to convene a statistically representative microcosm of the people, gathered under good conditions for a deliberation”**.

Over 400 participants randomly selected from the districts of Butalejja and Bududa were gathered to deliberate upon how to deal with the environmental disasters and population pressures that challenge life in these vulnerable communities. For ease of implementation, discussions were divided in to three topics including; Resettlement Management, Land Management and Population Pressure. The community was joined by Makerere University faculty, district representatives, the office of the Prime Minister in Uganda, Stanford University Center for Deliberative Democracy (CDD) in the United States of America (one

of RAN's Core Partners) and representatives from the ResilientAfrica Network (RAN). Prof. William Bazeyo, Dean Makerere University School of Public Health and RAN Chief of Party/Lab Director in his remarks emphasized that ***“How best can we work with the communities affected to cause change in the same communities?”*** He added that Uganda was the first country in Africa DP had been executed, so could we use DP results to cause change and relieve the Government and those suffering

## Photo Gallery



**Community Consultations in Progress**