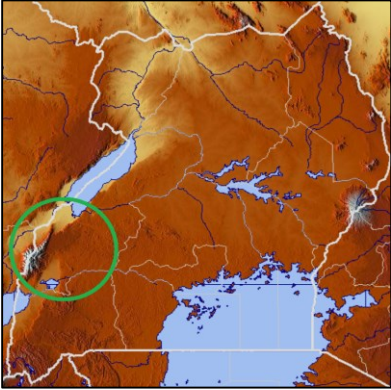


### Project context

Despite the rich natural endowments, the Rwenzori Region (RR) in Western Uganda faces enormous challenges: over exploitation of its natural resources, high population growth rates and poverty among the majority of the smallholder households. There is high demand for research and education to address these challenges and to elaborate solutions collaboratively with local stakeholders enabling an agroecological (AE) and socio-cultural sound development based on a sustainable and economic use of regional resources.



**Main Project Objective:** to address the gap in knowledge and skills in AE in the RR, both in higher education and for community outreach.

The AER partnership project is designed as a continuous mutual exchange process of skills, knowledge and experiences between BOKU, the Mountains of the Moon University (MMU) and regional stakeholders, such as smallholder farmers, community officials, private sector and cultural institutions. The inclusion of these stakeholders and the analyses of their needs and demands enables the AER project to build adopted capacities in higher education, research and community outreach in the field of Agroecology in the RR in Western Uganda.

Within the AER project AE stands for a systemic and transdisciplinary approach towards diverse multi-functional agriculture, which not only includes the "pure" field of agriculture and ecology, but also takes into account all the other influencing factors (social, economic, political, etc.) interfering and overlapping.



Agricultural activities at the steep slopes of the Rwenzori range

### Academic objective:

Improved knowledge, science and skills in interdisciplinary agro-ecological principles and systemic understanding of agricultural systems in higher education, research and community outreach at MMU.

### Development objective:

Empowered communities enabling the adoption of sustainable agriculture production methods based on traditional knowledge, alternative agriculture, and local food system experiences among smallholder farmers and the elaboration of entrepreneurial skills along the food chain in the Rwenzori region.



AER-team members participate at the 1<sup>st</sup> Tropical Agroecosystems Conference

### Expected results

- MMU Staff trained in AE principles including the socio-cultural dimension, systemic understanding and transdisciplinarity
- Established participatory action research framework between MMU and the stakeholder communities to enable knowledge exchange and therefore socio-economic and agro-ecological innovations
- Developed and running stakeholder-driven, regionally embedded Master's curriculum in AE at MMU to form alumni capable to decisively contributing to the prevalent challenges in the Rwenzori Region
- AE demonstration farm at MMU established and consecutively used as an outreach centre for AE principles in the RR



Free ranging piglets in Austria



Marketing of plantains in Uganda



AER team explores Organic farms in Austria



Mountain villages in the Rwenzori Region