

Training for Trainers Session & Farmers' Dialogue Kenya – Nov. 1st – 10th

A Training for Trainers session was held in Kenya near the city of Nyahururu. It was held at the Tabor Hill Catholic prayer centre in the cool air close to the equator at 2,362 m (7,749 ft) above sea level. Delegates attended from Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, DR Congo, Somalia and South Sudan. The course dealt with questions linked with team-building, personal commitment, and reconciliation (which is often a key to development). The courses are intended to teach the delegates how to instruct trainees in the fundamentals of team-building and empowerment. This one was led by experienced trainers from Ukraine and the United Kingdom who had developed the Foundations for Freedom (F4F) course, originally for people from Eastern Europe.



Trainees

The Kenya course was a follow-up to the training held in Rwanda in March 2011, and was organised at the request of those who had taken part in Rwanda. The teamwork developed between Farmers' Dialogue and F4F has great potential, and is based on the link between personal attitudes, commitment and the needs of humanity. The course gives a basic knowledge of tools to conduct and facilitate training sessions aiming at empowering farmers, and the F4F team has produced a 100-page handbook for each person to use as a reference tool when

they run courses in their respective countries.

The day after the training finished there was a special day for people to meet, exchange ideas and learn about F4F and Farmers' Dialogue. Those who met were farming groups, friends of the trainees and "Creators of Peace" which empowers women to become peace-builders, starting in their own lives and communities. (Both F4F and Creators of Peace are programmes associated with Initiatives of Change, as is Farmers' Dialogue). Hajji Ssebalu Jamil, coordinator of the African Farmers' Dialogue, presented a report of the activities undertaken by the members in the African countries. See - <http://www.farmersdialogue.org/report-farmers-dialogue-activities-in-africa>

Mr Joseph Kirimi Mutuma, District Agricultural Officer for Nyandarua North, was the guest speaker. He said that about 72% of Kenyans were farmers, many of them small scale. He highlighted that the need to produce more food was an important task given the increasing population and droughts. He presented certificates to the trainees. At the end of the meeting a short ceremony was held to mark the development of a constitution for the new Farmers' Dialogue International (FDI) that will be registered in Switzerland in January. There were about 80 people present for the occasion.



Mr. Joseph Kirimi Mutuma seated



Nyala milk collection and cooling plant

After the Training Session there were two days of farm visits arranged by Mr Mutuma and his staff. This included a visit to Nyala Milk Collection scheme that serves over 30,000 farmers and is playing a major role in lifting the economy of everyone in the area. It began in 2000 with 210 members. The chairman of the cooperative, Mr Samuel Ngure Wanjohi made the point that the scheme was started and run by farmers and the operation has been built on honesty and trust. He proudly stated, “There is no corruption.”



Mr Samuel Ngure Wanjohi

The group also visited three intensively managed small farms. One farm is using maize plants for silage, the harvested maize is covered by a layer of plastic and soil and can be kept for up to ten years and used during a drought. There was a visit to a grain store built with funds from the International Fund for Agricultural



Visit to one of the small farms

Development, to be used and run by local farmers with the help of local agricultural officers, enabling farmers to store their grain for times of need such as during a drought. The store is working well as there has been no need for famine relief since it began to be used. Two of the farms each demonstrated how dairy cows and intensive vegetable production complemented each other.



Local farmers in front of grain store

Farmers, both men and women, are at the heart of food production, and we saw what happens when they are listened to and their concerns are heeded. Farmers often feel they have a thankless task of producing something for less than the costs of production. This is causing some farmers to leave the land. Genuine support from all levels of society is required.

George Kamau, Duncan Nduhiu and the Kenya team did an outstanding job in organising the events. Thanks to their good management, all accounts were paid with a small surplus remaining that is to be used towards preparations for the International Farmers’ Dialogue in DR Congo in November 2013.



Members of the course and visitors on the special day

We have already had a report from one of the participants who had applied what she had learnt in Kenya in running a course on organic farming. We hear of others aiming to apply some of the lessons they learnt during the farm visits. Similar events are being planned.