

Of seed, song and dance...

The **Kivaa Seed and Food Fair** organized by the Institute for Culture and Ecology (ICE) was held on the 16th of October 2010 at Kivaa Health Centre in Kivaa town. Bringing hundreds of farmers together, the colourful event coincided with the World Food Day. As well as celebrating the formation of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the day is commemorated every year to increase awareness, understanding and informed, year-round action to alleviate hunger.

The chosen theme for the day was “*Tujivunie mbegu zetu za kiasili*”, swahili for “*Celebrating the heritage of our indigenous seeds*”. Community groups from Lari, Masinga and Meru districts turned up in all their splendor to showcase their beautiful culture. Some of the items presented by the communities included, poetry, drama, songs and dances. Guests and local people of Kivaa town were treated to splendid presentations that showcased the various cultures of the performing community troupes.

Also on display were varieties of seeds and foods that are indigenous to the various communities. This proved to be a favorite among the school children who were also in attendance. They had a chance to sample delicacies prepared with indigenous produce. In all the performances of the day, one message was clear; that our culture is rich in indigenous food biodiversity which can be used to address the food insecurity challenge facing us. Indeed, it is with this in mind that ICE holds such events occasionally. They provide the community with an opportunity to showcase traditional foods that people have used for millennia as well as providing rare opportunities for local people to educate others. We also seek to initiate community-led strategies inclined towards food sovereignty at the local level.

After a series of competitive performances around the theme of the day, the Kamburu Group carried the day and was declared the overall winner. The Meru Jitegemee Group also put in an impressive show and came in a close second. Kivaa va-mweki Self Help Group and Kiithio kya Mawithyululuko came in 3rd and 4th respectively. All in all it was a colorful ceremony and we would like to thank our dear friends at ABN for all the support. Simon Mitambo was the guest of honour and he handsomely articulated the theme of the day in his inspiring speech on advantages using local seeds.

“...Culturally, agriculture reflects our diverse tastes in food (our foods according to our tastes and our culture). It also promotes local consumption and agricultural biodiversity. This is one of the primary reasons for valorizing local production. These local foods constitute a viable counterfoil to the changing urban dietary trends that are dependent on foreign foods.” *(An excerpt from <http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/features/65933>)*

Here are some of the beautiful sights....



Some of the foods on display.....



All set to perform



Adjudicators listen carefully before their decision



Mburu joins the community troupe for a dance



Students sample all things culture



Proud winners lift their cup high...