



# Annual Report 2017

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## Institute for Culture and Ecology

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## Word from the Director

I am pleased to share with you 2017 Annual Report for Institute for Culture and Ecology (ICE). The report details progress over the past one year and highlights some of the milestones for ICE.

This annual report is a source of pride, as we look back on what has been accomplished in the past year and it serves as inspiration for continuing our work while capitalizing on new opportunities that present themselves, all in an effort to empower communities for healthy ecosystems and people across the target communities in Kenya.

In line with ICE Vision of empowered communities living in a healthy ecosystems, in 2017, over 10,000 ha of critical ecosystems (forests and water catchments areas) were rehabilitated. This was achieved through sensitizing community members' adjacent to these areas and promoting alternative sources of livelihoods to reduce pressure on forested areas. In addition, 29,518 tree seedlings were planted on these ecosystems. ICE also promoted use of energy saving stoves whereby 440 households installed the stoves and using them, enabling rural community who rely on wood fuel use less energy in cooking.

ICE also built capacity of community networks and groups in engaging leaders and stakeholders and other relevant agencies in lobbying for community-led initiatives. During the year community groups held tree planting initiatives with stakeholders like Kenya Forest Service as a result of this linkage and empowerment. This is good progress, but we know there is still a lot of work to be done to impact our communities.

Participation in national and international forums provided ICE with opportunity to share and present the development perspective of communities which ICE works with regarding to environmental conservation, climate change and agriculture.

I wish to thank the advisory board and staff who



worked diligently to achieve the expected results. We are also grateful to our development partners and donors for their commitment to walk with the organization throughout the year. Special appreciations to the leadership of target counties for their unceasing support to the local community initiatives to alleviate poverty through an enhanced healthy environment and food security. Thank you for your interest and support as we continue to empower rural communities so the world can be a better place.

Let me conclude by emphasizing my personal commitment to continually strengthen collaboration among various actor such as both national and county government and development partners for a greater impact on community work and initiatives 2018. We will do more together!

**Martin Mwenda Muriuki,**  
*Executive Director*



## About ICE

**T**he Institute for Culture and Ecology (ICE) is a national indigenous non-governmental organization (NGO) that was started in 2006 and is registered in Kenya under the NGO Coordination Act. ICE was founded out of a visible need to promote the inherent and natural role of culture in environmental and natural resource management. In Kenya ICE accompanies communities as they rediscover the value of local knowledge and naturally endowed resources potential in the processes of livelihoods improvement and environmental conservation. This enables communities to drive their own development hence detach themselves from the poverty cycle. ICE has been working with community groups and schools in Tharaka Nithi, Machakos, Meru, Nairobi and Kiambu counties in Kenya.

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### Vision

Empowered communities living in healthy ecosystems

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### Mission

To enhance resilience of ecological systems and community livelihoods using diverse knowledge systems

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### Core Values;

- **Respect for diversity:** ICE accommodates diverse cultures as a way of promoting mutual respect and nurturing relationships
- **Equity:** ICE believes in equal opportunities for all irrespective gender, religion and ability.
- **Accountability:** ICE embraces openness and responsibility in all its actions and activities
- **Professionalism:** ICE upholds work ethics and diligence in its undertakings.

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### Programmes/ thematic areas

- Natural Resource Management
- Food and Seed Sovereignty and Community Livelihoods
- Advocacy and Networking
- Research, Documentation and Knowledge Management
- Institutional Development

## Achieved results for the year

**T**his report is a synthesis of outputs and outcomes from ICE work undertaken in the period January to December 2017. ICE activities, focused on working towards protection of critical community ecosystems and promoting ecological sustainable agricultural practices with the target communities across six counties in Kenya. This also involved mobilizing communities groups and networks through working together to influence policies and plans at the local (county governments as this is in line with ICE strategic plan 2016-2020.

### Conservation of forested areas and riparian ecosystems in six counties

ICE worked with community conservation groups such as Community Forest Associations (CFAs), Water Resource Users associations (WRUAs) and custodians of community Sacred Natural Sites to undertake rehabilitation and awareness initiatives in efforts to conserve the critical ecosystems. This was done in partnership with relevant government departments from both national and county governments.

#### 1.1. Production of tree seedlings and tree planting

During the year, forty-seven (47) community groups across six counties raised and planted 29,518 tree seedlings on critical ecosystems as well as on public lands. This was a community-led initiatives organized by the groups and partly supported by ICE and in some areas such as Embu and Muranga, the groups also partnered with Kenya

Forest Service. The activities involved the larger community members as a way of creating awareness on environmental conservation. During tree verification exercises carried out three months after tree planting showed an average of 60% survival rate of all the tree seedlings planted.

#### 1.2. Engagement of schools – Environmental Clubs

Six schools in Muranga, Tharaka-Nithi and Meru, were supported to establish tree nurseries and farm forests through working with their pupils environmental clubs. Through the initiative, pupils and students are learning on different species for conservation in different ecological zones as well as importance of environmental conservation. This initiative facilitated a platform for building environmental consciousness among the young people.



Engaging pupils in tree planting activities



### 1.3. Development of Eco-cultural maps and calendars

Eco-calendar and maps concept was introduced to the communities of Muranga and Embu counties. The process enabled the local communities to understand their ecosystems and change of seasons by comparing the past (over 50 years) with the present. This helps community plan for future including actions to help them adapt to impact of climate change. Through these calendars and maps process, communities are able to plan better in addressing environmental challenges such as forest degradations, biodiversity loss and livelihoods improvement. More so seasonal calendars enable them to recuperate their seeds.



Community eco-calendar development process in Muranga

### 1.4. Environmental conservation campaigns

Three environmental conservation campaigns were held in the month of June to commemorate World Environment Day in Tharaka-Nithi, Kiambu and Embu Counties. Key messages emphasized were need to protect critical water and forest ecosystems such as Kathita River that has source in Mt. Kenya, Ntugi Hill in Tharaka and Kiangombe Hill in Embu county. Two thousand, three hundred and fifty (2350) community members were reached out in 2017 during the events and tree planting initiatives. From the sensitization, community has become conscious on environmental conservation, this has been evident by public participation and demand for tree seedlings for planting in public areas and farms. In addition, community groups have started initiatives on planting trees on critical ecosystems and water catchment areas on their own.

### 1.5. Capacity development on sustainable watershed management and community forest monitoring

ICE supported workshops to enhance capacity of extension officers from government and CSOs in Kiambu and Muranga Counties on sustainable watershed and natural resources management. The participants learnt about environmental laws and policies, the role of civil societies, the role of both government (county and national), private companies and the local communities



in environmental conservation and livelihood improvement. Action plans were developed to guide collaboration in implementation of the project and building synergies in conservation specifically protection of water catchment areas such as Aberdares water tower. In Kiambu, ICE supported forest adjacent community in Nyamweru Forest to re-examine their relationship with the forest. As a result of the process, community identified major causes of forest degradation such as human activities. They deliberated on actions for rehabilitation of this critical ecosystem. In addition, ICE supported community to initiate non-timber economic enterprises such as bee keeping. Through such initiatives communities ensure forest are protected as they are able to get non-exploitative benefits.

### **1.6 Mobilizing and exchanging knowledge on territories and biodiversity**

ICE in partnership with Tharaka Community hosted a regional exchange workshop in partnership with African Biodiversity Network (ABN) and SwedBio on mobilization of indigenous and local knowledge for community and ecosystem wellbeing through Multiple Evidence Based (MEB) pilot project. This workshop demonstrated in practice that it is possible for different knowledge systems to be applied based on equity and explore issues related to diverse knowledge and practices about biodiversity governance, with rich and innovative outcomes. While initially agreeing on problems and common challenges, new solutions can be

found through cross fertilization - and weaving of knowledge. Local communities, elders from many parts of the world, development practitioners, and scientists of different disciplines met and enjoyed the same activities and shared knowledge on biodiversity governance on an equal level, where all contributed.

### **1.6. Promoted use of energy saving stoves to ease pressure on critical ecosystems**

In rural areas, fuelwood is predominantly used for cooking. Majority of these rural households use traditional stoves that have a low energy efficiency; i.e. require more wood fuel, increase indoor air pollution and put a lot of pressure on biomass resources. In year 2017, ICE continued to promote use of energy saving stoves through training on use and material support of liners for installation. During the year four hundred and forty (440) households installed and started to use the energy saving stoves. The beneficiaries reported that they now use less fire wood (reduced by estimate of 50%) and less smoke while cooking. This efficiency of the new stoves is evident whereby community members including those not direct beneficiaries of ICE have installed the stove. This has contributed to high adoption of the stoves among beneficiaries as well as wider community as was evident during project monitoring. In addition, the improved cooking stoves have become an important part of climate change adaptation helping communities reduce the amount of firewood they use and hence saving more trees and averting forest destruction.



Mrs. Macharia shows her energy saving stoves installed in May 2017.

## Enhanced Food sovereignty for 1800 households

### 2.1. Small-scale farmers supported to diversify their livelihoods

ICE facilitated trainings for diversification of livelihoods including, agroforestry, livestock keeping and establishment of home gardens. Farmer groups were supported with toggenburg goats for dairy milk, agroforestry tree seedlings and top-bar bee hives to initiate various farm enterprises. Farm diversification is helping farmers reduce risk from climate change hence building their resilience as well as reducing pressure on natural resources by creating non-timber enterprises such as bee keeping and hence farmers are keen in promoting diversity on critical ecosystems.

### 2.2. Agro-ecological farming practices adopted by farmers

During the year, twenty-five (25) trainings were held on sustainable agricultural practices. The trainings were on-farm with 70% involving practical skills. Farmers were trained on how to venture into a diversified agriculture, which include livestock rearing and agro-forestry farming (fruit trees) to increase their income and enhance their resilience to effects of climate change. Farmers are replicating lessons learnt from the trainings with high adoption being establishment use of organic manure, use of terraces for on-farm water harvesting, crop rotation and crop diversification. The adoption of agro-ecological agriculture has impacted farmers positively by an increased farm production and also improving their household income, whereby

farmers are able to save money used for buying vegetables for home consumption as they get from home gardens. This enables farmers to save for other expenses such as education and health.

### 2.3. On-farm and household water harvesting technologies adopted

To counter the challenges of water scarcity among local farmers especially for household and home gardens, in 2017, ICE continued to support farmers with on-farm and households water harvesting technologies including use of water tanks. The support has been in form of encouraging community groups mobilize resources and supplement project's effort in enhancing that each of the direct beneficiary has a water storage facility. During the year, 309 water tanks were handed over to farmers. In addition, 120 farmers established on-farm water-harvesting structures. The initiative has gone a long way in increasing production and improving socio-economic status of beneficiaries as a result of easing livestock keeping and management of home garden hence more livelihood options.



On-farm water and soil conservation technologies being adopted in semi-arid areas – Tharaka and Mbeere, Embu



ICE director, Mr. Martin Muriuki handing over water tanks to community groups in North Imenti, Meru County. the function graced by Hon. Rahim Dawood Member of National Assembly, Imenti North Constituency



#### 2.4. Post-harvest management enhanced

ICE supported trainings on post-harvest handling as well mobilizing target groups and supporting them acquire Hermetic bags. This has reduced post-harvest losses for over two hundred households across all project areas. The reason being Kenya estimates that 20% of cereals are lost even before reaching the market. Post-harvest losses is one of major challenges facing small-scale farmers in rural communities in Kenya

#### 2.5. Market linkages for smallholder farmers

A majority of small scale farmers in Kenya and Africa as a whole have limited access to up to date market prices for various farm produce from their farms especially in the rural areas.

A majority of small scale farmers especially in the rural areas have limited access to up to date market prices for various farm produce. In addition to building farmers capacity on sustainable agricultural practices, ICE has strategized to expose and enhance capacity of farmers on basics skills about marketing, agricultural value chains, undertaking market survey and how to overcome marketing constrains. During the year, Farmers in Meru and Kiambu counties were trained and facilitated with skills to undertake marketing including formation of marketing groups.

#### 2.6. Recuperation and adoption of indigenous seeds

As a strategy to enhance resilience and adaptation capacity to climate change, trainings were held on seed recuperation, preservation, selection and storage to promote multiplication of indigenous and traditional seeds as well as household seed-banks. In the year, one hundred and seventeen (117) households established household seed-banks. The major indigenous and traditional seeds recuperated and multiplied include; Millet, Sorghum, Green grams, Cowpeas, Finger millet and Castor seeds.



**A farmer of ICE group from Machakos exhibits indigenous and traditional seeds recuperated during agricultural show organized by county**



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### **Strengthened collaboration and partnership among relevant stakeholders**

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During the year, ICE engaged various stakeholders in the target project areas who include KFS, WRA, MoA, NEMA, KTDA, FBOs, county governments, and policy makers from the national government. As a result, ICE has influenced the stakeholders to support community-led initiatives on environmental conservation and eco-agriculture. In some capacity development workshops for community members, ICE co-facilitated with these stakeholders. This partnerships with government institutions has increased confidence among community members and farmers on initiatives promoted.



**Mr. Wathome, chairperson of Community advocacy network shares community initiatives on environmental conservation undertaken by local community in Machakos to lobby for support by county government during a policy dialogue**



## Voices from the ground!

### Diversification of livelihoods as climate change adaptation measure

Mary Kaindi of Tharaka-Nithi County, confirms that diversification not only enhance food security, but enable farmers in semi-arid areas adapt to climate change. Goats and chicken provide income when crops fail due to inadequate rainfall. Mary could not hide her happiness saying that before the venture, her family would have chicken meat only during Christmas times, but now they can afford at least once in a month. Her husband is also happy that Mary is a member of the group and that whatever she learns, they implement.



Kivaa elders are committed in restoration of Kivaa Sacred Hill. The elders and community at large are now proud of their efforts. They have reclaimed the lost glory.



Some of small livestock that Mary is keeping to diversify livelihoods



Mrs. Mary Mbaabu a member of Meru Jitegemee group, Meru county says farm planning and application of ecological farming practices is enabling her feed her family and earn income from her quarter acre ecologically managed piece of land.



## Challenges, Lessons Learnt and Recommendations

### Challenges

- Major challenge is high demand for actions on rehabilitation of critical ecosystems which ICE could not meet with resources available. This is because there is more to ecosystem rehabilitation than supporting community-led conservation initiatives. More actions such as advocacy initiatives to lobby for enforcement of policies and laws set in regard to ensure conservation and protection of these critical ecosystems, supporting joint initiatives and sensitization forums to wider community. ICE endeavored to engage more stakeholders to reach out to wider community for greater impact.
- Promotion of external chemicals has negative effect on adoption of agro-ecological farming practices. However, ICE has been encouraging farmers to do their own experiments on compost manure and biological pest management in comparison with external inputs as well as sensitization on effects on over use of external chemicals to human health. This has increased adoption of sustainable agro-ecological land use and farming practices.

### Lessons learnt and recommendations

- Stakeholders' engagement is critical in implementing a community project, this has led to support of initiatives from the National and County government departments such as agriculture and Kenya Forest Service as well as linking the officers and the local community members. ICE will continue to strengthen partnerships with relevant stakeholders in the project areas which is in line with its thematic Programme 3 under the 2016-2020 strategic plan.



## Financial report

**How ICE utilised it's financial resources in the year 2017**



- Objective 1: To strengthen community groups to spearhead conservation of degraded ecosystems.
- Objective 2: To support households to raise control of their food production systems.
- Objective 3: To increase the participation of groups in influencing decisions and policies that affects their economic, social and cultural (ECOSOC) rights.
- Objective 4: To strength ICE governance and staff capacity, and to raise ICE resources to enhance effectiveness and sustainability.
- Project Administration & Monitoring
- Office Administration



## Appreciation

**W**e thank our donors and partners for supporting us in transforming many lives in 2017. This work is contributing to our 5 years' goal under 2016-2020 strategic plan and also sustainable development goals. The support and enthusiasm has helped in fulfilling ICE mission of supporting livelihood of communities in Kenya to sustainably improve their quality of life. Together, we continue to touch and positively impact the lives of these communities. ICE appreciates the support of National and County governments of Meru, Machakos, Embu, Muranga and Tharaka-Nithi for providing and enabling environment to operate.

Special thanks to the community members who implemented the projects and ensured that maximum results were achieved.

## ICE Partners

- African Biodiversity Network (ABN)
- Biodiversity and Biosafety Association of Kenya (BIBA)
- Biovision Foundation
- Coady International Institute
- Compass Africa
- Greenpeace Africa
- Participatory Ecological Land Use Management Kenya (PELUM-K)
- Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC)
- UNDP - Small Grant Programme /Global Environment Facility (SGP/GEF)



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