



2018 Annual Report

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Institute for Culture and Ecology



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Networking for a greener Africa.



Word from the Director

ICE marked its third year in implementation of strategic plan 2016-2020 in keeping on our vision of empowering communities to live in a healthy ecosystems. ICE continued to implement activities across six counties in Kenya, reaching out to over 3500 households directly and over 10,500 households indirectly.

This report presents the glimpse picture of experiences and achievements during the year.

ICE engaged community groups including conservation groups around critical ecosystems in its target counties in promoting sustainable land use practices and at ecosystem at farm level. This has gone a long way in linking environmental conservation with livelihoods, which has increased confidence among local communities in conserving their critical ecosystems as they understand the direct benefits from these ecosystems. One of key milestones and evidence of this is on forest restoration and protection as well as rehabilitation on the degraded, but critical ecosystems. This community engagement has gone a long way in reduction of human activities that lead to destruction on these ecosystems that are biodiversity hot spots.

During the year under reporting, ICE hosted a two-week regional training workshop on indigenous knowledge in enhancing resilience among Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) from Southern African region, West Africa, Canada, East Africa and Horn of Africa. This new partnership with COADY International Institute, Christensen Fund and Compas Africa will go a long way in deepening ICE work on promoting indigenous knowledge in community resilience building in Kenya, Horn of Africa and beyond.



ICE noted increased commitment of communities in undertaking and upscaling the initiatives through their own contribution and this goes a long way in enhancing sustainability. Other stakeholders especially policy makers and at the county level have also supported community-led initiatives including materials such as water harvesting tanks, tree seedlings, energy saving stoves and to co-support initiatives promoted by ICE.

ICE envisages increased partnerships, collaborations and networking relationships with relevant stakeholders and other like-minded organizations working on environmental conservation and also promote eco-friendly land use and farming practices for healthy people and ecosystems at all levels - nationally, regionally and internationally. I believe that we will continue strengthening the partnership towards the progress and betterment of our country Kenya and a better world even as local communities develop resilience towards the adverse effects of climate change.

Martin Mwenda Muriuki,
Executive Director



About ICE

The 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.

Vision

Empowered communities living in healthy ecosystems

Mission

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

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.

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

This report is a synthesis of outputs and outcomes from ICE work undertaken in the period January to December 2018. 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

1.1. Production of tree seedlings and tree planting

A total of 24,920 tree seedlings produced for rehabilitation of critical ecosystems (Nyamweru Forest, Kivaa Hill, Kilimbogo Forest Hill, River Kathita, Ntugi Hill, Maragua River and Kiangombe Hill) across six project counties. Forest ecosystems has engaged community members in the project areas and stakeholders such as Kenya Forest Service (KFS), Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), WARMA and other Relevant County departments. The survival rates of the trees planted ranged from 80-85%. This was achieved as a result of continuous awareness creation and partnership with relevant government bodies such as KFS, hence increasing confidence of community members in engaging in tree planting activities for restoration of critical ecosystems.

In addition, Kenya experienced heavy rains in April-June that motivated communities to plant more trees as this increases survival rate and also improved natural regeneration. During the period there was marked surveillance on the vulnerable ecosystem to stop degradation.

1.1.2. Engaging young people in schools environmental clubs

During the year, ICE engaged six schools through environmental clubs on environmental conservation by offering technical support in management of farm forest and environmental initiatives being undertaken by pupils. The initiative has increased participation of young people both in and out of schools in environmental conservation and in turn building culture of conservation consciousness among young people. The schools engaged have committed to continue with initiatives, however the risk is the changes of head of schools and patrons whereby other come in with no or little interest on initiatives.



Supporting community-led tree planting initiatives in rehabilitation of critical ecosystems



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1.2.1. Development of Nyamweru Forest community eco-cultural maps and calendars and digitization

ICE supported finalization of development of eco-calendars and maps in Murang'a and Embu, a process that was initiated in 2017 in the two counties. This included development of actions plans for community members to undertake as steps for realization of their aspirations.

The actions agreed include; increasing environmental conservation awareness, community-led tree planting initiatives, awareness creation on sustainable land use practices, lobbying for the relevant government bodies to support the initiatives as well as undertaking recuperation of indigenous food crops, adoption of eco-farming practices that will cushion communities from destroying their forest and vulnerable ecosystems for their livelihoods.

The communities will be referring and reviewing the progress of their action plans from time to time. In addition, ICE will continue to mobilize resources from other partners to strengthen community led initiatives.

ICE also engaged a consultant from Kenya mapping resource centre in digitization of Nyamweru forest map developed by local communities to use it as a tool to lobby for the protection of the forest as well as use it for awareness creation among farmers.

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1.2.2. Environmental conservation campaigns

Four environmental conservation campaigns held in Meru, Muranga, Kiambu and Embu counties that brought together representatives of community groups engaged in ICE projects, other community members and stakeholders.

The campaigns reached out to the community members on the need to conserve environment through adopting of sustainable land use practices.



These sensitization forums have built consciousness among community members on matters of environmental conservation through helping them understand their roles in protecting critical ecosystems as well as increasing partnership between relevant government bodies and community members.



Environmental conservation campaign

1.2.3. Regional workshop on resilience

ICE in partnership with Coady International Institute and Compas Africa, hosted a two weeks East Africa and Horn of Africa regional training workshop in Kenya on Indigenous and local knowledge for community resilience in October 2018. Participants were drawn from five countries in Africa. The training used Endogenous Development as an approach to address threats that inhibit the issues around ecology, food and seed especially among pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities living in semi-arid areas with a special focus on women.

The overall experience inspired a strong community of learning and practice, a network of like-minded organizations, and a sense of solidarity that by using an endogenous development approach, which in the long run can innovate African solutions to African problems. Participants were tasked to implement and document learnings from the workshop in their own countries and organizations and share in 2019.



Proceedings during Indigenous and local knowledge for community resilience held in Meru Kenya, October 2018.



Participants' discussion with farmers in Meru during training on Indigenous and local knowledge for community resilience



1.3.1. Capacity development of conservation groups

ICE supported meetings for four conservation networks in Kiambu, Machakos, Embu and Tharaka-Nithi counties. These community networks are engaged in conservation of Nyamweru, Kivaa, Kiangombe and Ntugi forests ecosystems.

The networks were supported in undertaking their initiatives as away of building their capacity in conservation. Some of conservation initiatives being undertaken by these networks as a result of capacity building includes; sensitizing wider community members on conservation, lobbying with duty bearers for the support of these networks and ecosystems restoration and Sacred Natural Sites to increase even the forest cover.

1.3.2. Establishment of community cultural learning centres

ICE supported dialogues for operationalization of community cultural and learning centres in Kivaa, and Tharaka. The centres will be used to keep indigenous seeds and where documented indigenous knowledge on conservation will be kept for accessibility to wider community members especially youth, hence knowledge transfer.

1.4.1. Support Installation of energy saving stoves

In the year, 1,017 energy saving stoves installed households across the five project areas (Meru, Tharaka, Embu, Muranga and Kiambu). This was a contribution of the ICE projects and beneficiaries. This has increased number of households using energy saving stoves among ICE beneficiaries to 68%. In the long run, this initiative will reduce pressure on forested areas and unsustainable cutting down of trees whether on farm and on public areas due to low demand for wood fuel as uses less firewood.

In addition, women health will improve as the stove has less smoke compared to traditional methods. They will also save time to engage on other households economic activities and community activities in general as time used for fetching firewood has reduced.

This is one of the highest adopted initiative under objective one of environmental conservation.





Result 2: Enhanced Food Sovereignty

2.1.1. Livelihoods of households diversified

Trainings held on livelihood diversification among smallholder farmers in target project regions. Participants were advised on potential livelihoods options to establish based on their ecological areas. Some of benefits of livelihoods diversification highlighted includes; making use of farm potential, increase income among households, help communities to adapt to climate change.

During the year a total of 310 households have diversified livelihood options as a result of trainings and material support to initiative new farm enterprises. These initiatives have gone a long way in increasing income security among households as reported by farmers during monitoring discussions.

2.2.1. Target households adopted agro-ecological farming practices

ICE held capacity development trainings on sustainable agriculture practices majoring on agro-forestry and on-farm soil and water harvesting techniques across the four target counties. The trainings were facilitated by ICE staff and extension officers from ministry of agriculture (MoA). The trainings reached out to 502 (305 females/197 males) farmers. ICE also facilitated continuous follow-ups on replication of sustainable farming practices at the farm level. This is increasing adoption of practices as there is support after trainings.

In addition, ICE supported a total of eight (8) inter-county learning exchanges across target counties.

Farmers were exposed to various evidence based farming practices from dairy management, crop diversification, soil and water harvesting, small livestock keeping and multipurpose trees and shrubs.

The activities acted as a tool for farmers to interact and learn on evidence base practices from other institutions/farmers undertaking the practices promoted by the project. 80% of farmers reached through trainings and exchange learning

2.3.1. Water harvesting technologies adopted

ICE supported purchase of 76 water tanks that were handed over to new groups in Embu, Muranga and Meru. In addition a total of 152 tanks have been mobilized and purchased by community members from the three counties. This has enabled 228 household in 2018 acquire water tank for household water harvesting. Water tanks has been enabling farmers establish home gardens and integrate livestock keeping as they have reliable, where water connected to the households is rationed



Ms. Ruth Kirimi of Meru County at her farm
- Agroforestry for food security and environmental conservation



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2.4.1. Capacity of households on post-harvest management enhanced

Trainings held on post-harvest handling in Embu and Tharaka that reached out to 76 farmers (48 females and 28 males). The two areas were prioritized for the trainings as farmers rely on cereals and overtime have experienced loss due to poor post-harvest handling.

2.5.1. Households linked to markets for their farm produce.

Workshops on agro-marketing held in 2018. This aimed at increasing partnership as well as sustainability of initiatives. ICE also supported farmer groups to host three exhibitions where they exhibited their products in potential market outlets. This aimed at increasing market for organic farm produce and linking farmers to markets. During the event, stakeholders were invited and community leaders as well as local media stations. ICE supported establishment of juice processing unit through a co-contribution from the group purchased Commercial Heavy Duty Juicer, Juice blender and Juice Dispenser/ Perschulizaer purchased to enable establishment of value addition unit for juice processing.



Established Juice processing unit in Kamburu, Kiambu. The outlet is helping farmers undertake value addition of their farm products (fruits)

2.6.1. Support recuperation, production and utilization of indigenous and

Four dialogues held in Kivaa and Tharaka on recuperation of indigenous seeds. As a result a seed map was developed for guiding farmers in recuperation of seeds.



Mr. and Mrs. Kirimi from Kwangombe village in Meru shows harvest from their farms. According to the young family who rely on farming, indigenous and traditional food crops yields more as they are drought tolerant.



Result 3: Capacity enhanced on advocacy and networking

3.1.1. Community policy reflection forums

Four forums supported that brought together communities living around Nyamweru Forest and policy makers and government agencies such as KFS and Water Resource Authority (WRA). These forums helped in finalization of Nyamweru map and validation of digital map developed.

Participants (community and stakeholders) agreed on actions to implement in protection of the forest. These will be followed up in 2019. ICE will also mobilize more resources to support community-led actions.

3.2.1. Enhancing collaborations and partnerships among stakeholders in target counties

Four county forums held that brought together community members from ICE groups and others from wider communities together with stakeholders at county level and other CSOs in the regions. Farmers engaged directly in the project exhibited farm produce and shared with stakeholders initiatives they are undertaking as a way of lobbying for support from County and other stakeholders. The County government leaders agreed to strengthen collaboration with ICE. They also promised that will ensure ICE target groups will benefit from county agricultural plans including materials in future. ICE engaged local media stations during implementation of advocacy activities and exhibitions to enhance visibility of ICE work and reach out to wide community members on awareness creation on sustainable environmental conservation and livelihoods initiatives.

Result 4: Research, documentation and knowledge management

4.1.1. Capacity development of community research groups

Two trainings held for Kivaa and Tharaka research groups on collecting and analysing information regarding indigenous seeds and tree species. This facilitated development of seed map.

4.1.1. Capacity development of community research groups

A total of 320 eco-friendly bags printed with messages of promoting sustainable land use practices. The bags distributed to community members and stakeholders as communication materials.

Result 5: Institutional Development

ICE supported capacity building workshop for staff and advisory board members on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation.

This aimed at strengthening result based management at ICE. The process facilitated review monitoring tools (reporting templates at different levels) and also development of monitoring and evaluation plan in line with Strategic Plan.



ICE team Training on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation



Voices from the ground!



Traditional Institution of Governance in Kiambu shares their initiatives with Kiambu County Conservator. The elders are committed in reclaiming the glory of Nyamweru Forest using indigenous knowledge and practices.



Community members living around Kiangombe Hill in Embu County formed a Community Forest Association. They are committed to rehabilitate the critical ecosystem through working with stakeholders in the region.



*Mary Wathika is happy farmer, despite tea occupying more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of her farm, her 30*50ft home garden is supplementing livelihood for her family. She has planted arrowroots, sweet potatoes, variety of vegetables and bananas, in addition she has a dairy cattle and hence able to get milk and enough manure for her garden. Mary and her husband are happy with the results of their home garden.*

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. However ICE strategized to partner with key stakeholders such as Kenya Forest Service (KFS) and county government extension officers to reach and maximize the set results.
- Conflicting approaches from other development partners and government working in same ICE target regions. This is mostly through promotion of conventional/industrial agriculture while ICE promotes agro-ecological farming practices. This was addressed through farmers' capacity development on agro-ecological farming and promoting on-farm farmer-spearheaded research. Promoting agro-ecological farming practices goes a long way in protecting natural resources such water catchment areas.

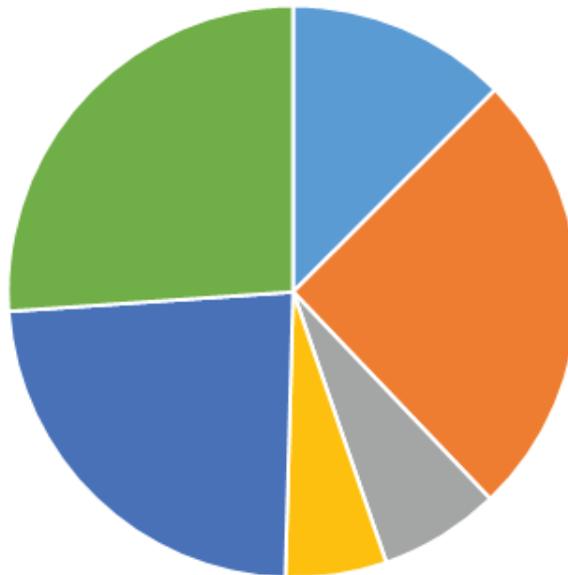
Lessons learnt and recommendations

- 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 2018



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

We 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

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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