



Annual Report 2016

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Institute for Culture and Ecology

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Word from the Director

2016 marked one decade since Institute for Culture and Ecology (ICE) founded as a development organization in Kenya and a first year of implementation of a five-year strategic plan 2016-2020. ICE work with local communities has continued to be energized as we witnessed communities improving their livelihoods as a result of applied interventions. In particular communities mobilizing their own resources and also engaging their leaders in upscaling the initiatives that promote sustainability of projects that kicked off in 2016.

ICE endeavored in seeking new and innovative approaches that would help in empowering communities for healthy ecosystems and livelihood improvement in line with its mission and vision.

During the year, in collaboration with community conservation groups, over 30,000 tree seedlings were planted in an effort to rehabilitate degraded critical ecosystems. It is in the same period that 855 households were reached through building their capacity on sustainable farming practices and community livelihoods.

One of the key achievement in 2016 ICE was able to venture into new counties namely Muranga and Embu and also to upscale its work in its previous working regions hence now working in six counties in Kenya. The other four Counties include Kiambu, Machakos, Meru and Tharaka-Nithi.

As I conclude, I want to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to all our stakeholders such as development partners, national and county governments You have walked with us as we have strived to address some of the



pressing needs in our communities. My pledge remains to ensure that the cordial relations we have enjoyed will continue to be nurtured as you support us in fulfilling our mandate towards environmental conservation and livelihood improvement that will lead to empowered communities.

I am truly privileged to have a supportive team: ICE Advisory Board members, Staff and Management in leading this great organization to do what it does best.

We will continue to engage with our partners and communities towards a fruitful future.

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

The work implemented in 2016 was under ICE strategic plan for 2016-2020. The strategic plan provided direction to address the ever-increasing environmental, natural resource management and community livelihood challenges as well as to align to the sustainable development goals. The year 2016 was therefore first year of the 5 years plan for ICE.

1.0. Conservation of forests and critical ecosystems enhanced

Environmental degradation and Poor governance of natural resources, unsustainable land use practices are the main cause of depletion. ICE has endeavored to work with the local community conservation groups such as Self Help Groups, Community Forest Associations (CFAs) and custodians of sacred natural sites to rehabilitate critical ecosystems and undertake sustainable management of forest. In realization of this result, the following were key initiatives undertaken in 2016 and their contribution.

1.1. Tree production and tree planting events

As a step towards rehabilitation of degraded riparian ecosystems, fifty (50) community conservation groups were supported in establishment and management of tree nurseries. As a result, 30,784 indigenous tree seedlings were produced and planted in Machakos, Kiambu, Embu, Murang'a, Meru and Tharaka Nithi Counties on the degraded ecosystems. These ecosystems include Kathita, Mbathi and Maragua riverines; Kivaa,

Kilimambogo, Kiangombe and Ntugi forested hills. A tree verification exercise was conducted in all sites where trees were planted and showed approximately 60% survival rate. Individual members of these groups have also established multi-purpose tree nurseries on their private farms which is helping in reducing pressure on forested areas. This is one of community-led initiatives established by direct beneficiaries.

In efforts to engage young people six (6) schools namely: Maragua and Nginda primary schools in Murang'a; Nthimbiri and Gachua primary schools in Meru, Ndurumoni primary School and Marimanti Girls High School in Tharaka, were identified and supported to undertake environmental conservation initiatives and establish school farm forests.



A community-led tree planting initiative at Kilimambogo Hill ecosystem



1.2. Environmental conservation campaigns

Six environmental campaigns were conducted culminating to the world environment day celebrations and during tree planting events. These events engaged different stakeholders including officers from Kenya Forest Service (KFS), National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), county department of agriculture, and department of social development and religious leaders. The events reached out to 1793 community members and about 200 pupils. Messages on need to conserve the environment were emphasized by the different stakeholders who made speeches. There was also exhibition of various trees species for rehabilitation of degraded ecosystems and agroforestry.

1.3. Workshops on Indigenous and local knowledge and Sacred Natural sites

Two workshops were held in Tharaka to promote use of indigenous knowledge in conservation and importance of sacred natural sites. One workshop was held in Tharaka and brought together custodians, local community members and stakeholders of water and food such as officers from county departments of environment and agriculture. The workshop involved delving into the indigenous and local knowledge of Tharaka community on ecosystems/biodiversity conservation and seeds management. As a result, a local community research group was formed which includes the young, middle aged and elderly generations from Tharaka community. Together with the elders, the community research group collects and document information on water-friendly trees for rehabilitation of water catchment areas as well as medicinal trees and herbs in

order to restore them.

The second workshop was a national workshop that brought together custodians of natural sacred sites, organization working communities on ICCAs, SNS and indigenous knowledge. The workshop aimed at understanding the position of SNS in Kenya in terms of legislating and downloading of the recommendations of international undertakings as well as providing a platform for discussion on the role of CSOs in protection of SNS.

1.4. Supporting installation of energy saving jikos (stoves)

The community groups in Muranga, Embu, Tharaka-Nithi and Meru Counties were supported with 375 energy saving liners. The beneficiaries provided materials for installation of the liners to be an energy saving stoves in the four project areas. This initiative was also embraced by leaders whereby in Meru 115 additional energy saving liners were supported by two members of the parliament and one community leader and distributed to the community members. The overall aim of the initiative is to ease pressure on natural vegetation and forested areas and also reduce time consumed for search of fuel wood.

2.0. Enhanced food sovereignty and community livelihoods

ICE has been promoting agro-ecological farming practices to enhance seed and food security and sovereignty. This entails enhancing communities' adaptive capacity to effects of climate change through identifying the most important indigenous crop varieties that are more resilient to little rainfall and less fertile soils. The following are the initiatives that led to achievement of the results under this programme. .

2.1 Capacity development of small-scale farmers on agro-ecological farming

A total of twenty-three (23) trainings were held in Machakos, Meru, Tharaka, Embu and Muranga counties. Key topics covered include on-farm water harvesting, establishment and management of home gardens, composting, agroforestry and tree management, soil and water conservation techniques, crop rotation and inter cropping. The trainings reached out to 855 small scale farmers directly across the 5 counties. On-farm monitoring conducted indicate that about 85% of the trained farmers have replicated the sustainable agricultural practices on their farms and they are also training the larger community who are not direct beneficiaries.

In addition, ICE facilitated one experiential learning visit in Machakos. These enabled farmers from Matungulu and Yatta sub-counties learn from other farmers practicing sustainable dry-land farming methodologies.



Farmers learn on establishment and management of home garden during experiential learning exchange in Machakos



On-farm training on dry-land farming technologies in Yatta, Machakos County

2.2. Promoting diversification of livelihood options

ICE supported farmer groups with livestock seeds for livelihoods diversification as a way of promoting farmers' knowledge of various climate change adaptation strategies and also supporting farmers in resilience building in the face of climate change. These materials included: Eleven (11) Toggenburg goats given to 8 groups comprising of 239 households in Muranga and Meru; Eight (8) rabbits given to 2 groups comprising of 80 households in Muranga; and a hundred (100) improved chickens given to 7 groups comprising of 421 households in Embu and Tharaka. The livestock seed are for upgrading local/indigenous breeds. This support acts as a motivation to farmers to mobilize their resources to purchase more for every group member to get.



2.3. Post-harvest management and value addition

Most of ICE farmers especially just like many farmers in Kenya have been suffering due to post harvest losses hence not getting maximum benefit from their farming. This has been due to inadequate knowledge and capacity on post-harvest management. In cognizance of this ICE supported a training in Tharaka for capacity development of farmers on post-harvest management. Farmers were equipped with skills on how to reduce post-harvest losses specifically by: harvesting crops at the right time, drying the cereals before storage and sorting and grading of the cereals in order to remove affected produce for better marketing and also preservation purposes. Tharaka was prioritized due to high cereals harvested compared to other areas.

In addition, ICE supported farmers with one hundred and thirty (130) Purdue Improved Crop storage (PICS) bags in Meru, Tharaka and Muranga. The beneficiaries of the PICS bags have reported their effectiveness in keeping cereal harvest safe from pests without using chemicals. The bags are also saving the farmers' incomes which they used to purchase pesticides.



Farmer to farmer learning on poultry rearing in Matungulu, Machakos County



Farmers exhibit various indigenous and traditional seeds during seed fair event in Yatta, Machakos

2.4. Seed / Food fairs and Exhibitions

Four (4) seed fair events and one farmer exhibition were held in Tharaka-Nithi, Muranga, Embu, Meru and Machakos counties. Farmers show-cased various products from their farms to the wider community and stakeholders. The activity provided a platform for farmers to exhibit their farm enterprises hence broadening market. This also promoted information sharing among the farmers on indigenous seeds management. The events brought together farmers, county and national government officers from ministry of agriculture and environment and national and county policy makers and journalists from local media stations.



Six farmer groups receive Toggenburg goats to promote diversification in Meru County



Water tanks handed over to farmer groups in Meru County

2.5. Material support for water harvesting

Water scarcity is increasingly being exacerbated by environmental degradation and effects of climate change. This has led to unreliable water supply from piped water agents at the local areas which is not supplied daily and hence demand for water storage facilities such as tanks has risen especially in Meru and Muranga. In 2016, One hundred and thirty-five (135) water tanks of the capacity ranging from 500 liters to 3000 liters were purchased and handed over to 135 households in Muranga, Embu and Meru Counties. From the 135 tanks, 90 tanks were purchased through community contribution in Meru. This initiative has promoted the establishment of home gardens and eased livestock keeping, hence diversification of livelihoods.

3.0. Built capacity of community groups and networks in advocacy

ICE engaged local communities to help them secure their rights through getting more involved in decision-making so as to influence decisions, policies, plans and emerging human right issues that directly affect them. ICE also engaged county governments especially the policy makers in influencing enactment and enforcement of policies that promote sustainable land use practices and community led initiatives for livelihood improvement. The following were activities that led to achievement of this result.

3.1. Supported food sovereignty campaigns

ICE engaged a local media radio station namely holding a live talk shows on community-led farming practices to help in building adaptive capacity of farmers to the negative effects of climate change. The platforms engaged with wider community members of the target areas. ICE also engaged a local TV stations during women enterprise activity which captured major highlights for the day. These highlights were aired and helped in increasing visibility ICE work in promoting sustainable land use practices.

3.2. Supported advocacy expedition during World Food Week

This was a campaign that involved mobilization of county leaders in Machakos to create awareness and lobby for supporting environmental conservation as well as ecological farming that support community livelihoods. Farmers had an opportunity to present their views to county legislators. During the period lobby meetings were held with selected key donors and embassies in Kenya whereby petitions were presented by the farmers urging donor support ecological farming systems and sustainable environmental initiatives.



Policy dialogue between ecological farmers and members of county assembly committee - agriculture and environment, Machakos County

Voices from the ground!



"One of the things we are proud of as Kivaa Community since we started working with ICE, is rehabilitation of the Kivaa Hill. The important Hill was losing its value a few years ago but now its is respected and protected and we are committed to working with stakeholders to ensure that this is sustained". Mr. Lukas Kioko, Chairperson, Vamweki



"I get best produce from the farm on which I use compost manure. Compost manure lasts longer and retains water while the chemical fertiliser takes just a season or even less to get depleted from the soil." Gervasio Mwituria M'anampiu, ICE beneficiary from Meru County.
Source http://www.farmers4thefuture.org/?page_id=171

Challenges, Lessons Learnt and Recommendations

Challenges

- High demand from the community members on challenges facing them related to natural resource management and community livelihoods. ICE was able to counter the challenge through engaging different stakeholders in the respective counties to build synergies in supporting the communities.

Lessons learnt and recommendations

- Strengthening networking and collaboration with other like minded organizations and partners during implementation of projects during the year helped ICE reach out to more beneficiaries for some initiatives than target set in 2016. This has also increased visibility of ICE work at local, national and regional level.
- Communities' members can address challenges facing them with minimal support when mobilized and capacity built. This has been evidenced whereby some groups mobilized resources for purchase of live-stock for livelihood diversification, water tanks and energy saving stoves in addition of what they were given to ensure each of the member has at the household level.



Financial report

How ICE utilised it's financial resources in the year 2016



- 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 2016. This work is contributing to our 5 years' goal under 2016-2020 strategic plan and also contributions to 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

- Act Change Transform (Act!)
- African Biodiversity Network (ABN)
- African Women Development Fund (AWDF)
- Biovision Foundation
- COADY International
- 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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