



FAO Kenya Newsletter



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Welcome to the third newsletter of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Office in Kenya this year.

This edition highlights issues on gender and food security and looks at some innovations that are promoting equitable food security. We examine how an initiative on agribusiness support for smallholders is improving the livelihoods of banana farmers. As the countdown to World Food Day fast approaches, key events are lined up including a new award competition aimed at recognizing outstanding contributions by the media in Kenya.

Robert Allport
FAO Representative in Kenya, *a.i.*



Tabitha Mwende (foreground) and Mary Muli exude confidence- the women received training in leadership and their self esteem and courage was boosted can now actively contribute in meetings and engage in dialogue
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Gender and Food Security

A look at some innovations that are promoting equitable food security in Eastern Kenya

Josephine Maetha is not only a parents' representative for class three at Kwanganga Primary School, but is also a church leader in charge of women's affairs at Mbui Baptist Church in Kyuso District. Josephine has recently taken up these responsibilities thanks to a leadership training she received from 'One voice against gender inequity in food security', a joint initiative of FAO, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and World Food Programme (WFP).

This initiative seeks to unearth the issues of gender vulnerability and exclusion in food security to develop an alternative approach to resolving these issues. The project uses the lessons learned to influence dialogue and hence resource allocations at the district and county level. "Before the training," she explains "we used to be nominated for leadership positions but we always turned them down.

We are now confident and able to lead other people, men included."

Josephine's story of empowerment and self discovery is not unique among her fellow Kasyathu Food Distribution Point (FDP) group members. Theirs is a story of a struggle against all odds in an existence subjugated by poverty, unequal opportunities and lack of self confidence to emerge triumphant in charting their lives' destiny. With support from generous contributions from the Italian public, the project invited leaders of the various FDPs for training in leadership and community management of disaster risk reduction. The FDP is a WFP food distribution group structure. ■

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A project undertaken by the local NGO Help Self Help Centre with Programme support worked to improve understanding of the Kenya Forest Act among forest adjacent communities in Ragati and Chehe, as well as their participation in Forest Management Plans. @EU FAO FLEGT Programme.



Sustainable Forest Management

EU-funded initiative addresses forest governance and illegal timber trade in Kenya

In addition to helping achieve food security, poverty alleviation and economic development, FAO considers Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) an important mechanism to reversing the current trends in forest loss and degradation. These trends coupled with a growing awareness among consumer countries on the need to promote legal timber production and trade have provided a new drive in global efforts to address issues of Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT). FAO is therefore working with local stakeholders in timber-producing countries to improve governance in the forest sector under the four year EU-FAO FLEGT Programme. The Programme, which benefits from decades of FAO experience in forest governance initiatives, is demand driven and supports government

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institutions, civil society and private sector organizations in their efforts to test new approaches to improve forest governance and enable SFM. "The Programme is a crucial funding stream for eligible timber-producing countries like Kenya," says Robert Simpson, the Programme Manager. "In relatively short timeframes, we are able to target financial

resources into the hands of local stakeholders to help them address issues of forest governance and trade in illegal timber and timber products," he adds.

Funding opportunities to eligible timber-producing countries like Kenya are still available through the Programme's direct assistance

mechanism open to government institutions and its periodic calls for proposals open to government agencies, civil society and private sector organizations. The next call for proposals will take place in September 2013. ■

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Young Agripreneur goes "Bananas"

How a young agripreneur is bringing prosperity to rural farmers through banana value addition

'For the first time, pizza has nutritional benefits...', states a post on the face book page of Stawi Foods and Fruits. This post refers to Stawi Natural Banana Flour, a novel flour used to make pizza base, porridge and pasta. The flour is a product of Eric Muthomi's banana processing enterprise that is winning accolades in the agro-processing sub-sector. Mr. Muthomi, 26, is an agripreneur who has benefitted from an FAO initiative that is linking Small and Medium Agro-Enterprises (SMAEs) to markets, business support and representation.



Since 2010, FAO has been implementing the Agribusiness Support for Smallholders (AbSS) project in conjunction with the agriculture Ministry. Funded by Germany's agriculture ministry, the project aims to spur growth in the sector by increasing productivity, commercialization and competitiveness. Through viable business models and improved institutional capacity, it is envisaged that strengthening SMAEs will increase their contribution to agricultural development.

AbSS has been reaching out to viable emerging agro-enterprises that deal in edible oils, cereal milling, fruit and vegetables, dairy and meat production. Selected business and market linkage service providers working with the agricultural ministry have been training beneficiaries at the grassroots. Mr. Eric Muthomi is one such beneficiary through his Stawi Foods and Fruits company founded in 2011 and currently employing 15 women and youth. Eric procures organically-grown bananas from 150 smallholder farmers in Meru and processes them into banana flour.

The training has equipped agripreneurs like Mr. Muthomi with skills that support business management and growth. "The business plan training I received in 2011 helped me develop a strong business plan that won three national awards, including Jitihada Business Plan Competition in 2012." The Jitihada award by the industrialization ministry targets innovations that can be nurtured for growth. "I have also received training in marketing, human resource management, food safety and quality control," he adds. The project provides a platform for networking and mentorship.

"I have just been listed among Africa's top 30 under 30 entrepreneurs by Forbes Magazine. None of this would be possible without the great support of great partners like AbSS", declares Eric, "I am fired up to build Stawi into a thriving business that will help solve Africa's most pressing problems in food security, nutrition and employment creation." ■

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FAO on Air

"Hazina Fichu", a Swahili statement depicting livestock as wealth, is an interactive radio program that disseminates lessons to livestock owners and producers in Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) on the hidden treasure in livestock. It is aired every Friday between 8:30pm and 9:00pm in KBC's Radio Taifa from July to September 2013.

Shamba Shape up, a regular television program on Citizen TV, targets agriculture and livestock farmers. The Sunday program will soon start disseminating information on maize lethal necrosis disease, indigenous poultry production and health, and hygiene practices. ■

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World Food Day 2013

"Sustainable Food Systems for Food Security and Nutrition" will be the focus of World Food Day. To commemorate the day on 16th October 2013, **The Annual World Food Day Poster Contest** has been launched with the theme 'Healthy Food Systems'. Deadline for entries is 30 September 2013. See: <http://www.fao.org/getinvolved/worldfoodday/wfd-poster-contest/2013/en/>

World Food Day Media Award for under 30s
The inaugural World Food Day Media Award in Kenya has been launched. The award aimed at recognizing outstanding contributions by the media is organized by FAO in Kenya. ■

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Emmie Serves the UN for 30 Years



Emmie Muriithi started working with FAO in July 1983. She has since worked under 8 FAO Representatives and in 2009, received the organization's 25 year Seniority Award. Emmie, a mother of three and six grandchildren, will be retiring to go and relax with her family.
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