



# INFOSPOT

**KEEPING YOU INFORMED**

**FIRST EDITION**

## QUARTERLY REPORTS AND PLANS FOR PELUM-KENYA

### THE LAUNCH OF THE PELUM-KENYA INFOSPOT

#### Introduction to Infospot by Zachary Makanya

I wish to welcome all the members of PELUM-Kenya and collaborating partners to this first issue of the PELUM-Kenya's **InfoSpot**. This three page pamphlet is produced out of a strong desire to share information within the PELUM Association in Kenya. We at the Country Desk strongly believe that the **InfoSpot** is a positive step towards strengthening information sharing within PELUM-Kenya. We may not be home but we are convinced that we are on the way to being a hub for information sharing and promoting networking.

#### The strength of Working with diverse communities in the Post election crisis in Kenya

The year 2008 was not welcome by business as usual for the better part of the first Quarter of the year in Kenya. In fact, in the first two months of the year it was getting unclear by the day what was in waiting as the country remained engulfed in the political post-election violence crisis and most activities were disrupted.

The indigenous food project which is being implemented by 5 members with the Kamba, Luo, Kikuyu, Luhya and Pokot communities was just one such point of a spotlight. During a joint meeting which had been scheduled for January 2008 but did not take place until mid March 2008, this turned out to be one of the many unifying efforts being pooled together by Kenyans and the world at large. This review and planning meeting was held on 18<sup>th</sup> March and brought together Program managers, accountants and project field extension officers from SMART Initiatives, RODI, BERMA, YARD and INADES Formation.

It was a mixture of solitude and hope when participants recounted the ordeals they had gone through during the post-election violence skirmishes. A staff of SMART Initiatives had his house razed down, while RODI had to drastically reshuffle the field officers who were working in Luo Nyanza. YARD had received its share of IDPs to resettle in Gatanga, mainly people who were re-settled elsewhere during the building of the Ndakaini dam. They had therefore momentarily revert to sourcing for support to put them into housing facilities and taking their children to schools. PELUM Kenya had participated in a meeting organized by CO-RAT Africa for EED Partners and shared with this team that it would be important for organizations to undergo some form of counseling.

The meeting continued to review the Indigenous food baseline survey process which involved data collection in the field among the five communities, and the dissemination workshop held to analyze the results. The ecological production and action plans which translated to topics for on-farm trainings were also evaluated, noting the successes and challenges experienced. The participants thereafter developed and agreed on a work plan for 2008. Among the activities to be carried out are 2 ecological production trainings, continuous and regular on-farm trainings, agro-processing, value addition and marketing workshops. Field extension officers will also be facilitated in their work with a motor-bike. It was agreed that each Implementing Partner will host a workshop / training in the course of the year.

#### Aid to the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

There were thousands of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the first quarter of 2008. Some of these traced and found their way to ancestral land in Central province. In Gatuanyaga location, of Thika municipality division of Thika district; SACDEP Kenya in the goodwill efforts to assist these people sourced food and clothing items as well as some few toilettries.. The IDPs in Gatuanyaga have fortunately been hosted by other resident families and so the foodstuff given is to supplement for the bigger family size. On 6<sup>th</sup> March 2006, PELUM Kenya was part of this noble gesture and accompanied SACDEP where the group was gathered at Kilimambogo accompanied by the civic leaders. The foodstuffs & clothes were shared to them. We hope these people will find something to enable them earn a decent living.



*PELUM Kenya was represented by the Research and information Management (RIM) Program officer*



*As much as they could each carry home, they did, each bundle comprising of foodstuff and clothing items*



*"Hard to fathom but true" Ngugi Mutura encourages women IDPs at Kilimambogo as they recount what made them leave their once peaceful lives*

#### Campaign Advocacy and Lobbying (CAL) Program

In November 2008, PELUM-Kenya with the coalition members felt the need to check if the maize seeds farmers were buying were free of GMO contamination. With support from Greenpeace international, a survey was done. Samples were collected from different parts of the country.

An ELISA, test was done to 42 collected samples and 9 were probably for contamination. This 9 samples were subjected to a detailed test in a lab in Germany. Pioneer maize marketed by Farmchem seed co. in Kenya was found to be contaminated by MON 810.

KBioC through one of its members approached the government with the information. The government requested for 3 weeks to investigate and take action with clear government facts.

Africa Centre for Biosafety in South Africa released a press statement "FIRST GMO SEED SCANDAL IN AFRICA: SOUTH AFRICA CONTAMINATES THE CONTINENT". The discussion was on the fact that maize from South Africa which was thought to be free from GM was contaminating the rest of the world starting with Kenya. A seminar story was raised in Germany by Greenpeace and the Kenyan journalists followed.

The government has suspended the sale of this maize variety that is suspected of being contaminated with a genetically modified material called MON810.

## GMO Awareness Workshop in Embu

### Background

KukuKubu Agro organic Products, is a local community based organization (CBO) led by Jack Rware. As a member of KBioC, they invited the task force to the District Development Committee (DDC) to create awareness and generate debate on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) there. The awareness meeting was jointly organized and co-sponsored by KOAN, PELUM—Kenya and ANAW as part of the Kenya Biodiversity Coalition (KBioC) task force. The day was organized into two parts with the first session making a presentation on GMOs and organic agriculture to the DDC Members and second session at the Kigari Teachers College. The main objectives of the workshop were;

1. Raise awareness on (GMOs) and their potential threats to the Embu DDC Members and Kigari Teachers College Community
2. Offer an alternative production system i.e. organic agriculture that protects our biodiversity and is sustainable
3. Forge linkages with local community based organization to build their capacity on both the above issues.

### KBioC coalition

PELUM Kenya has continued to sit at the KBioC task force and have had several sittings where the implementation of the campaign strategies have been discussed and implemented. In the last three months, 2 meetings for the Core group have been held. These meetings have been there to evaluate the campaign and give the task force some new insights.

### PELUM-Kenya Annual General Meeting, (AGM) and Country Working Group, (CWG) meetings

The capacity enhancement program activities were affected by the post election violence which hit most part of the Country in the first quarter. This prompted the postponing of some activities. Among the major activities postponed was the PELUM Annual General Meeting (AGM) which was scheduled for February 2008. PELUM members come from different ethnicity background and therefore it was felt that such a meeting will be very necessary to bring about healing and reconciliation. 3 participants will be invited from each organization. To add more Quality and value, PELUM CWG Meetings will be incorporating field visits to member organizations.



Members inspect a vegetable drier during a field visit at SCODE during PELUM-Kenya AGM

## DDC Meeting

The committee comprises of leaders representing all sectors of development including education, agriculture, youth, and gender. The meetings went on with its agenda and at around 3.00pm KBioC was allowed in to make presentation.

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The meeting was chaired by the District Commissioner and had MPs Cecily Mbarire and Member of parliament for Manyata Constituency. The participants numbered about 100. The outcomes of the meeting were;

1. The Chair expressing appreciation for the enlightening information.
2. Cecily Mbarire said she had learnt so much and felt capable of greater scrutiny of the biosafety Bill if it was tabled in Parliament. She informed the Coalition that she would be happy to participate in mobilizing policy makers to a similar workshop.
3. One participant informed the gathering that they had visited a fair-trade organic coffee project in Tanzania and the farmers were benefiting immensely and there was therefore a need to replicate these benefits for Kenyan coffee farmers
4. One participant enquired about the next training course on organic agriculture and was able to join it.

As a follow up; KBioC task committee needs to take up Hon Mbarire's offer to help in building the capacity of our lawmakers on GMO related issues particularly with reference to having a strong Biosafety Bill

### Networking activities

PELUM-Kenya participated in Kenya Organic Agriculture Network (KOAN) AGM held in March at ICIPE. During the AGM PELUM-Kenya was re-elected once again to sit in the KOAN board. PELUM-Kenya and KOAN have collaborated in many areas. KOAN is the national movement for Organic Agriculture in Kenya. It is also the Custodian of Kenyan and East Africa Organic Trade mark certification. *PELUM-Kenya members are urged to join this national movement!* KOAN is also linked to International Federation for Organic Farming (IFOAM) an Organization whom PELUM-Kenya is also a member



Members had an opportunity to learn about table banking, a field visit at SLIDE-Kenya during the CWG Meeting

## Kigari Teachers College meeting

The institution is a member of KOAN. It is a training ground for both science and arts Teachers at primary school level. During the presentation there was a lot of interest and we addressed a gathering of about 1200 students the largest we have had so far as KBioC. The outcomes of the meeting were;

1. Many felt that a 2 hr session was too short and thus requested whether a similar workshop could be held at a latter date.
2. Many of the students felt that the issues raised were pertinent but wondered how to address the issue of food aid and consumer products that were not labeled whether they were GMO or not

In conclusion these two sessions showed that this avenue can be used to spread the messages on the GMO threat, weaknesses of the current Biosafety Bill and organic agriculture.

## UP-COMING EVENTS IN THE NEXT QUARTER

1. A 3-day intensive training course in Biotechnology, Bio safety, global concerns and Implications of GE / GMOs in Kenya
2. A 3-day national workshop for informal seed sector groups so as to educate them on GMOs and explore the possibility of establishing Seed Diverse Zones and GMO free zones
3. One informal seed sector in Makueni with INADES, Link with Indigenous food program
4. SUSALI II Program evaluation by SIDA
5. Plant Diversity, COP & MOP, Bonn Germany
6. Ecological Production Training hosted by YARD
7. Sensitization meeting on Indigenous food marketing groups
8. Board of Governance training 16<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup> April 2008, MANOR House Agriculture College will host the workshop in Kitale
9. Board of Governance training 28<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> May 2008, CREPP will host the workshop which will be held in Nyanza
10. Board of Governance training, 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> June 2008, CEFA will host the workshop in Meru
11. Board of Governance training 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> June 2008, ALIN will host the workshop in Nairobi
12. Follow ups visits on Monitoring and Evaluations
13. Agro processing, value addition and marketing workshop hasted by INADES Formation

# **RESPONSIBILITY IS KEY TO PEACE**

In the recent view of sorrow, sadness and despair that gripped our country due to post election violence, it's adamant to appreciate the need for peace and brotherhood in our country. To meet the challenges of our times, human beings will have to develop a greater sense of responsibility. Each of us must learn to work not just for oneself, one's own family or nation, but for the benefit of everyone. Responsibility is the key to human survival. The absence of war is of little value to someone who is dying of hunger or cold. It will not remove the pain of torture inflicted on a prisoner of conscience. It does not comfort those who have lost their loved ones. Peace can only last where human

rights are respected, where the people are fed, and where individuals and nations are free

Responsibility does not only lie with the leaders of our country or with those who have been appointed or elected to do a particular job. It lies with each of us individually. Peace, for example, starts within each one of us. When we have inner peace, we can be at peace with those around us. When we feel love and kindness towards others, it not only makes others feel loved and cared for, but it helps us also to develop inner happiness and peace. for, but it helps us also to develop inner happiness and peace.

In the light of this PELUM as a network should be responsible for one another as individual organizations to ensure peaceful relations are abundant amongst ourselves. With this growth and stability can be ensured of which the end result is prosperity—

**Ndiki Ndung'u**

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***The year 2007 came to an end with the Country Desk Staff enhancing the “team spirit” at the Desk by being actively involved in a staff retreat.....***

