

Report from Field Visit and Training Workshop for the Mbyo Community

October 2018

INTRODUCTION

Through partnership with the Christ the Redeemer Church (CtRC) in Norfolk, Virginia USA and the Anglican church Kigali Diocesan, Rwanda; with coordination by Rob Slaughter from CtRC; the first intensive agricultural training was organized and conducted for the week of 7th-9th August 2017 for the Mbyo community, and facilitated by Erwin Kinsey from ECHO East Africa, Jean Twilingiyumukiza from CFGB&MCC and Innocent Sibomana, the local facilitator.

The sustainable agriculture training was for 28 cell group leaders from six churches within the Mbyo Anglican Church and two other trainees from Butare, Rwanda. As the training outcomes, the trainees showed a kindest willingness to implement the acquired skills and hopefully Jean and Innocent agreed to work with the diocese to do follow-up of the training by visits to the trainees over the next few months, supported by the Christ the Redeemer Church. The two technicians successfully conducted follow up visits at household level and facilitated additional training sessions and study tour from then until end of June 2018.

A further three-month capacity development plan was again proposed. The plan includes monthly follow up visits to household, a Farmer Field Day (FFD event) and 3-day training on Conservation agriculture, financial education and nutrition.

This report summarizes the field visit plus the training activities conducted in October 2018 in Mbyo.

1. FIELD VISITS BY INNOCENT

The field visit took place on 6th and 13th October 2018. The visit objective was mainly to assess the current situation on the field and advise farmers re seasonal preparation and invite them to the forthcoming training workshop. All the farmers in Mbyo community were visited in their homes and most of them had no vegetable productions due to the unlikely prolonged dry season., farmers are well prepared for the cropping season and ready to plant/sow once they get enough rain.



Some of the Kitchen gardens are struggling to survive from the drought. Scarcity of rain and water sources

Despite the dry season, and given the importance of vegetables in diet, some partners tried their best to keep well some kitchen gardens and others were also encouraged to work hard/at all cost and at least keep a small portion of kitchen garden for vegetable production and family consumption during dry season.



Chaya plants are tolerating too much sun and greatly contributing to food security in the community of Mbyo



Some of the Kitcehn gardens well maintained (on small scale) are still producing vegetables for consumption

2. LEAD FARMERS TRAINING WORKSHOP IN MBYO, OCTOBER 23- 25

Preparation

Jean, accompanied by his friend Yves from Belgium, went to Mbyo on October 12th and met Pastor Eric with a small group representing the lead farmers. This was for the consultation and the preparation of the training with regard to: equipment and training material, meals during training, and other formalities. It was also an opportunity to collect the expectations of the partners in order to better concretize the training content with the reality from the field.



Prep Meeting with the partners reps in pastor's office



Visiting team with local partners after meeting

Participants

All the 28 Lead farmers (with 42% women) were able to attend the training. We only had two apology cases on the first day. (*Group Photo: Training Participants on last day*)



Training sessions/ themes covered

<i>Day/session</i>	<i>Time</i>		<i>Comments</i>
	<i>Before 12:30</i>	<i>After 1:30</i>	
Tue 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Devotion- Prayer& songs - Official opening by Pastor Eric - Icebreaker/Jean - Field visit debriefs by Innocent - Refresher presentation on Conservation agriculture (CA)/ Jean and participants - Description of the 3 key principles of CA: Min. tillage, soil cover and Crop association& rotations/Jean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The 4th important point: Soil fertility management (ISFM)/Jean - Recall of diff. sources of fertilizers: compost, manure, etc. and how to make them - Plant physiology and nutrition 	Participants are now well skilled on why and how to practice each CA principles and ISFM
Wed 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Devotion: Bible study and songs by Pastor Eric - Nutrition portion/Jean: why to talk about nutrition? Nutrition status in Rwanda and particularly in farming areas, problems of malnutrition (diseases etc.) and possible causes, how to make a balanced diet particularly in rural families and for the kids, different types of available foods and beverages with their nutritional values/importance, emphasis on the role of kitchen garden, hygiene and drinking water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Practical sessions on how to make a compost, to prepare a CA garden, delimitation with planting basins, putting manure and covering the soil (Due to absence of rains we did not sow) 	<p>Participants particularly enjoyed much the nutrition portion. They are ready to improve their nutrition habits</p> <p>We wanted to establish a model garden near the Church. Innocent, when rain comes will help sow the CA garden prepared for the vegetables,</p>
Thurs 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Morning Devotion- a good stewardship by Pastor Eric - Introduction to Financial Education/Jean: Started with an exercise on how each participant handles his/her daily financials, - Budgeting-Key message: manage your money wisely - Saving: you can do it! - Loan and credit management: To handle with care - IGA-Income generating activities: what is a project, how to choose a best project idea, how to implement and evaluate it? - Marketing: discussions on four (4) Ps: Product, Price, Place and Promotion - Closing ceremony by Pastor Eric 		Participants are really eager to start/improve their own business, and also willing to start a culture of saving (in cash and or in kind)

Schedule: On the first day we started a bit late (around 10 am) due to logistics and participants travels. Wednesday through Thursday, the workshop sessions begun from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm with tea break at 10:30 am and lunch break at 12:30-01:30.

As the photos here below show, the participants actively participated in the classroom sessions and also in the practical work. Before the last day, we left the room to visit the fields around the church and next to the classrooms.

In the field, the facilitator briefly explained: fertilization (with compost), soil structure, how to make the CA planting basins & planting etc. Participants were able to ask questions and receive responses from either their colleagues or the facilitator.

Gallery of photos



Training recommendations

- Participants greatly enjoyed this training workshop. They mentioned it's more practical and the topics covered really reflect their day-to-day life, so they are committed to put into practice most what they have learnt, especially improving their nutrition status, saving and handling credits with care
- The pastor urged the participants to help other church members with these training topics starting from Sunday Oct 28 with Financial education, then Nutrition portion on the next Sunday (Nov 04) and finally kitchen garden and CA debriefs on the following Sunday. These lasts (two) ones have to be implemented at each house/family level. So, others will learn from practices!
- It was also recommended that Innocent will also be look at all of these items (CA farm, Kitchen garden, nutrition improvement and financial management) when he is visiting.

Conclusion

It's very encouraging to work with the Mbyo community and the friends from the USA. We pray that God continue to strengthen us so that we continue help the community in Mbyo become more food secure and self-reliant.

END