

Village Volunteers in Action!

Climate Change Educators Training, Kenya

In September 2023, Village Volunteers funded a four-day training of Community Educators on Climate Change at Kyanduya Community Technical Training Institute (KCTTI) In Makueni County. The training was delivered in Kikamba (the local language) by Patrick Mbullu and Grace Muia, and attended by 21 men and women- 5 from the Kee Ward Climate Change Committee and 16 from three self-help groups: Kombuni Water Development, Natulenge Juu and Kitandi Fruit Tree Value Chain.



Participants pictured outside the Kyanduya Community Technical Training Institute.

The intent of the training was to equip community educators with the confidence and competence to work with local communities to respond to climate change, to mobilise local resources and to engage with other local actors. The training used the manual developed at the recent climate conference held by ICAs in Africa (partially funded by Village Volunteers), thus continuing the work started there and transferring the knowledge to the community level. The curriculum covered topics such as Climate Change and how it happens; How to adapt to Climate Change; Overcoming the effects of Climate Change; Caring for the environment; Leading the community response & preparing an action plan to cope with climate change.



The interactive nature of the training meant that, in addition to the knowledge shared by the trainers, the participants were able to identify some of the effects that climate change is having on their lives and livelihoods. Their stories revealed the increased frequency of droughts and changes in rain patterns, reduced pasture (and more conflict between humans and wildlife), less crop production, lower water tables and how these factors have, in turn, led to increased family conflict and greater poverty. They also revealed the extent to which community members feel

overwhelmed and helpless in the face of such changes, unable to draw on their traditional knowledge and challenged to find solutions that work. By the end of the training, however, participants reported a deeper knowledge of the issue and more ideas on how to address it, and were able to develop action plans for their work in communities.



Post Training

Included in the funding for the training was some post-training activities by the self-help groups. The groups decided to use the funding (approximately £90) in different ways: Kitandi put the funds towards protecting a tree nursery with netting; Kombuni used it to start a “table banking” scheme to boost group member’s own income (19 members are involved so far); Natulenge Juu used it on group farmland, providing a practical demonstration to their members and the wider community of what and how to grow more drought-resistant crops.

To ensure tree seedlings get the necessary care, nurturing and protection and the best chance to thrive, a slogan from the training has been widely adopted:

“Don’t plant trees, grow them”

The timing of the Climate Change Educators Training has worked very well and tied in with other initiatives in the area. Both Natulenge Juu and Kombuni, with other external support, have constructed sand dams to provide water both for human and animal consumption and irrigation. In addition to water conservation, both groups have taken an integrated response to climate change, establishing tree nurseries and demonstration farms, as well as providing schools with tree seedlings and, in the case of Kombuni,

planting 1,000 trees. Currently, the groups focus on sharing learnings from the training with their own members and communities (including schools), although both groups are expanding their influence by being part of the Kaiti River Valley, a community-based lobbying and advocacy group of 10 community groups, working to amplify community voices at the District level on issues relating to climate change.

The Village Volunteers sponsorship scheme is a project of ICA:UK, registered charity no. 1090745

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