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“Utilisation of diversity in land use systems:
Sustainable and organic approaches to meet human needs”

NECOFA Kenya Initiative in Inculcating Positive Attitudes in the Youth Towards Sustainable Management of Food, Agriculture and Environment

SAMUEL MUHUNYU¹, SAHLE TESFAI²

¹*Network for Ecofarming in Africa (NECOFA), Kenya Chapter, Kenya*

²*International Centre North South Dialogue (ICNSD), NECOFA International, Germany*

Abstract

Network for Ecofarming in Africa (NECOFA) is a community based NGO promoting Ecofarming: Ecologically and Socially Sustainable Land Management. NECOFA is committed to empowering communities to rediscover themselves; to scale up and out positive values of sustainable development that is based on minimum external inputs and rich social-cultural heritage. NECOFA is supported by Capacity Building International (InWEnt) of Germany.

To achieve sustainable development, it is important to invest and integrate the youth in development activities. The current generation is utilising and managing the environment and biodiversity on “lease” from future generations. It is therefore important to equip young people with knowledge and skills for sustainable management and utilisation of food, agriculture and the environment.

The NECOFA Kenya initiative in this regard involves school gardens and is being piloted in 2 primary schools (Michinda and Mukunyai) in Molo district.

Project objectives :-

- i. To influence and enhance interests and concern for “good,” “fair” and “clean” food in the growing youth.
- ii. To provide hands-on experience for the youth in food production and conservation of the environment.
- iii. To provide the youth with a platform for sharing/accessing information with others locally and internationally.
- iv. To multiply (bulk) planting materials in the schools for neighbouring communities thereby strengthening collaboration/partnership between schools and the community.
- v. The school garden projects become learning/demonstration centres for the community and other school youth.

To make the initiative enjoyable and interesting for the youth, the project has additional activities for the school club members i.e. the game of tenniquoit; exchange visits; newsletter and access to computer/internet.

The youth have shown great enthusiasm in this project and have trained fellow students, teachers and parents. They have also made presentations/exhibitions during public forums -food fairs, field days and agricultural shows. The schools are demonstration centres and source of planting materials e.g. trees seedlings for the community. The initiative is being replicated in other schools in the district and beyond.

Keywords: Ecofarming,school project