

# **SEED SOVEREIGNTY TRAINING.**

**Seed Rights, Alternatives & Advocacy.**

**BY**

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# Abbreviations.

- **KESSFF:** Kenya Small Scale Farmers Forum.
- **ESAFF:** Eastern & Southern Africa Farmers Forum.
- **CSBs:** Community Seed Bank(s).
- **GMOs:** Genetically Modified Organism(s).
- **UPOV:** International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants.
- **NGOs:** Non-Governmental Organization(s).
- **ARIPO:** African Regional Intellectual Property Organization.
- **SSF:** Small Scale Farmers.
- **MNC:** Multi-National Companies.

# SEEDS.

- “Give a man a fish and you feed him for the day. Teach a man how to fish, and you feed him for life time”.
- Seeds give more seeds, that produce more food from season to season hence seeds are cultural and a way of living.
- **Gen. 1:29**, *“I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They (seeds) will be yours for food”* (NIV Bible).
  - Here God strongly teaches man that; **Seed is food, is Life** i.e. **Seed=Food =Life !!**
- But because they multiply easily and are of small size, *we forget how critical they are to our livelihoods and existence.*
- **Seed selection** and **community plant breeding** are foundations to local food security with enough eat and with a surplus for sale.

# What are seeds?

- “Seed” conjures images of beginning, a start or a source especially in life's processes that has an expected end fruit, yield and reward and ensuring next generation.
- Seeds include bulbs, tuber, rhizomes, stems and spore.
- *Why are seeds important in Kenya/Africa?.*

# Seeds Viability.

- The **ability** of a seed or cutting to **germinate** or **grow** and **develop** normally.
- Seeds may have poor germination:-
  - Farmers buying fake seeds from the market.
- Leads to food insecurity due to a planting season lost.
- **Solution to poor seeds,**
- **Community Seed Bank (CSB).**

# Factors that affect seed viability.

- The way of Harvesting and Preservation.
- The Length and Conditions of storage.

## DISCUSSION.

- *How and when did our farmers harvest and preserve seeds? How did they keep them from pests and diseases?*

# Community Seed Banks

- Are collective spaces where small holder farmers **preserve** and **manage** their own planting seeds.
- Allows farmers to produce their own **quality seeds** through collective management.

# Role of KESFF/ESAFF in CSBs.

- KESSFF/ESAFF should be in the fore front of this:-
  - Legislating farmers' seeds,
  - Labeling the seeds as “quality assured” in place of the commercial “certified seed”.



# Seed Diversity.

- Without strong seed diversity, food production is threatened by disease and climate change.
- Assures farmers a particular harvest every season.
- Prevents **seed degeneration** caused by commercial seeds.
- **Seed sovereignty** enhances both seed and food security.

# Monoculture.

- Is pleasing and enticing to policy makers through a profit making mindset.
- It threatens:-
  - our national research agencies due to loss of breeding lines .
  - our local farmers and breeders due to inability to select better lines for consequent seasons.

# **Tissue Culture/Micro-propagation.**

- is production of plants under sterile laboratory conditions.
- supported by government and NETWORKS like KESSFF/ESAFF.
- enables farmers refresh their favorite seeds and desired varieties in the CSBs.
- maize, wheat, bananas, cassava, sweet potato.

# Intellectual Property Rights on Seeds.

- Recent number of seed varieties have been developed and patented through biotechnology e.g. GMOs.
- Promises increased production yield.
- **BUT !!!!**
- “Technology use agreements” and restrictions results to privatization of genetic resources and *monopoly of seeds and food market.*
- Controlling seed supply, food production and the market food chain.
- **BE WARNED !!!**
  - “Whoever controls seeds, controls the food supply” .

# Negative Effects of Seed Monopoly.

- Disturbance on existing exchange systems
- Create new pressures into agricultural markets
- Increases profits only to wealthiest MNCs
- Diminishing of smaller independent seed companies
- Costly purchase of hybrid seeds every season.
- Loss of farmers rights to choose preferred seeds.
- New crop pests and diseases.
- Loss of guarantee to seed purity and viability.
- Abuse of the right to food.

# Irony of International Seed Laws

- International seed laws **do not** protect the farmers but the industry; the farmers' right is nonexistent.
- Privatization of genetic information in seeds **contradicts** the core farmer right and sovereignty principles and **disrespects** the integrity of living systems.
- International laws must be domesticated.

***"Permitting legal ownership of life forms is morally wrong!"***

# Action on IPRs.

- Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) in our agriculture should be **prohibited**.
- Legislation of intellectual protection of seeds through UPOV & ARIPO should be **opposed**.
- **Promote** seed supply by **CSBs** because they are **locally** built, **locally** available & **locally** adapted.

# Role of Small-Scale Farmers (SSFs).

- Information sharing.
- About Advocacy & Campaign:-
  - activities, efforts, events, success stories.
- Demand to be Respected:-
  - Local farmers are labeled:-
    - Uneducated.
    - Unprogressive.
    - Poor and dependent on international charity foundations.
- Demand to be heard:-
  - UPOV caters for the economic interests of industrialized countries and DISREGARDS small-scale farmers in the developing countries that feed 80% of the world population.
- Reject legal extortion.
  - Harmonization of legal instruments is led by the same MNCs yet they will demand recognition among the small scale African farmers.



# KESSFF/ESAFF & ADVOCACY.

- **Advocacy:-**
  - the deliberate strategy to influence policy makers.
- KESSFF/ESAFF's advocacy targets:-
  - legislators/ policy makers.
  - fellow farmers .
  - the media.
- Ultimate success of advocacy:-
  - farmers' individual & communal ability:-
    - to make choices.
    - influence knowledge.
    - change attitudes and behavior.
- KESSFF/ESAFF's ability to oppose the MNCs from destroying seed rights is depended on the farmers' willingness to strongly defend their seeds.
- KESSFF/ESAFF to expose "Seed Traders Association" (STA) a network of private lobbyists are funded by UPOV and ARIPO

# Mass Media & Advocacy.

- Mass media:-
  - Television.
  - Radio.
  - Newspapers:-
    - To promote **public debate** and change community policies & norms.
    - To put **pressure on policy makers** by mobilizing community groups and improving coverage of seeds issues.

**END.**

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**Thank you !!!**