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).
  o 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.

- KESFF/ESAFF should be in the forefront 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:
  o our national research agencies due to loss of breeding lines.
  o 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.
Ironic 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:-
  o activities, efforts, events, success stories.

• Demand to be Respected:-
  o Local farmers are labeled:-
    • Uneducated.
    • Unprogressive.
    • Poor and dependent on international charity foundations.

• Demand to be heard:-
  o 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.
  o 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:-
  o the deliberate strategy to influence policy makers.

• KESSFF/ESAFF’s advocacy targets:-
  o legislators/ policy makers.
  o fellow farmers.
  o the media.

• Ultimate success of advocacy:-
  o 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.

ASANTE SANA.

Thank you !!!