

Workshop for Africa in Kenya

Launched in January, 2013 with six weeks of intensive training for 11 people from seven African countries, the Workshop for Africa (WfA) group spent two months in South Sudan to assist with the training of 200 Peace Mobilisers. After a period of evaluation of the programme and further training, the group is now active in Kenya.

In welcoming the group to Kenya, Joseph Wainaina, Vice President, IofC Kenya, said, "The team will be a great resource to IofC Kenya and we welcome the idea wholeheartedly. We will work with you to enable the team to give its best as well as gain stronger roots."



WfA has been in Kenya since the beginning of July. They began their three month's visit in the Rift Valley and have just completed a 10-day programme in the coastal city of Mombasa.

During these weeks they have visited a number of towns across Kenya, travelling by varied modes of transport, meeting a wide cross section of the communities, e.g. a former

Chief and County Administrator, farmers, business persons, civil servants, artists, university students, school leavers and housewives.

After one two-day dialogue facilitated by WfA in Subukia, 43 km north east of Nakuru, one participant who has been vying for political office made a commitment to stop sabotaging local community projects and will from now on mobilise community members for progress rather than destruction as has been the case in the past. Another participant made a commitment never to steal working time again from her employer, the government. She and her colleagues had over a number of years taken dishonest off days away from work resulting in thousands of hours in lost production.



In Ndaragwa the WfA team met with about 200 internally displaced persons (IDPs) Originally displaced in the 2007 post-election violence, they were resettled into this camp in 2011.



Sam Muiruri a member of the WfA team started with the construction of toilet facilities for the camp with 'bricks' made from plastic bottles stuffed with soil and waste plastic rubbish - turning a plastic disposal problem into a solution.

In Subukia, as part of the WfA's contribution to *Needs based Development*, Roy Ncube gave a demonstration on the plastic Bottle and Circle Farming techniques. This method of farming is excellent in areas that have

serious water challenges as it has an 80% efficiency water usage by plants. After the demonstration was over, eight farmers committed themselves to adopting this method of farming as it has many advantages for the farmer. Money is saved on pumping costs with once a week watering regime and the farmer has more time to attend to other farming activities. Another advantage is that even if the farmer has to go away on an emergency, even a small child can assist with watering to fill up the two litre bottle buried in the centre of the circle which provides water to the vegetables or maize planted in the circle.



On another occasion the WfA team spent the day in Simboiyon village in Waseges to meet up with 45 young men and women, comprising mostly of farmers, students and businessmen operating Boda bodas (motorbike transport) and the unemployed.

This meeting had been organised by two young men, Wilson Chariot and Mongi Murege, both previous graduates of the first two-day workshop held by WfA in Subukia. They were so fired up that they took the responsibility to make sure that their friends back in the village could also receive the same training that they had received themselves.

At the IofC office in Nakuru, the WfA group took time for a team-building exercise with 11 specific individual participants from the various areas reached.



These participants will continue the 'change activities' after WfA has left the country. The activity centred around answering questions to do with personal change that had happened to each member since their last encounter with WfA, what their own outreach plans were and how this network could be strengthened in order to keep the momentum of personal change going on.

In Bungoma County the team met with IofC friends Grace and Julius Khakula, and others.

They also had time with the County Commissioner, Mr Mohammed Maalin.

He resonated with the ideals shared by WfA and encouraged the group to meet up with all the relevant stakeholders in the county and motivate the residents for development, "if we all cared enough and shared enough, then no one will go to bed hungry," he said.

At the office of the Governor the WfA group met with Mr Wafula, the Chief of Staff in the Governors' office. He encouraged the team to spread the good message of transformed minds and people so that the quality of life for the ordinary man and woman can change for the better.

During these last days of August, the group has been in Mombasa County. There they had the opportunity to meet young men and women in a Mombasa suburb. One of the commitments from the participants at the end of the workshop was to make their town a drug-free zone.



Mr Mohammed Maalin. (centre)

Two days later 39 young high school and college students turned up to a two-day workshop on the theme 'Discovering the hidden treasure in you'. It took place at the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church in the suburb of Mkomani. Some decisions made were: start a youth group; stop using drugs and work to stop the peddling of drugs in the community; start a new chapter 'in my life' based on the four moral standards; 'live honestly and control my anger.'

The stories above have all pointed to a realisation by all present that a new Kenya begins with each one committing to changing themselves first before expecting the other person to change.

Reports by Roy Ncube

Roy Ncube writes about his 8 months with WfA: "I have experienced a firmer grounding of my faith. By giving up my time to be a WfA participant, my family has received many blessings. Our needs were met in most amazing ways. Being away from my family made me realize the value of each one of the family members. Moments of uncertainty that we shared, all helped to cement my faith in God and what He can do in our lives if we accept the call to serve. Working with WfA the value of teamwork came alive as we cared

for each other and shared everything that we had. The new relationships and networks created during this period will have a long lasting impact on my life.”