RODI KENYA NEWS LETTER

THE IMPACT

RODI Kenya
Resources Oriented Development Initiatives



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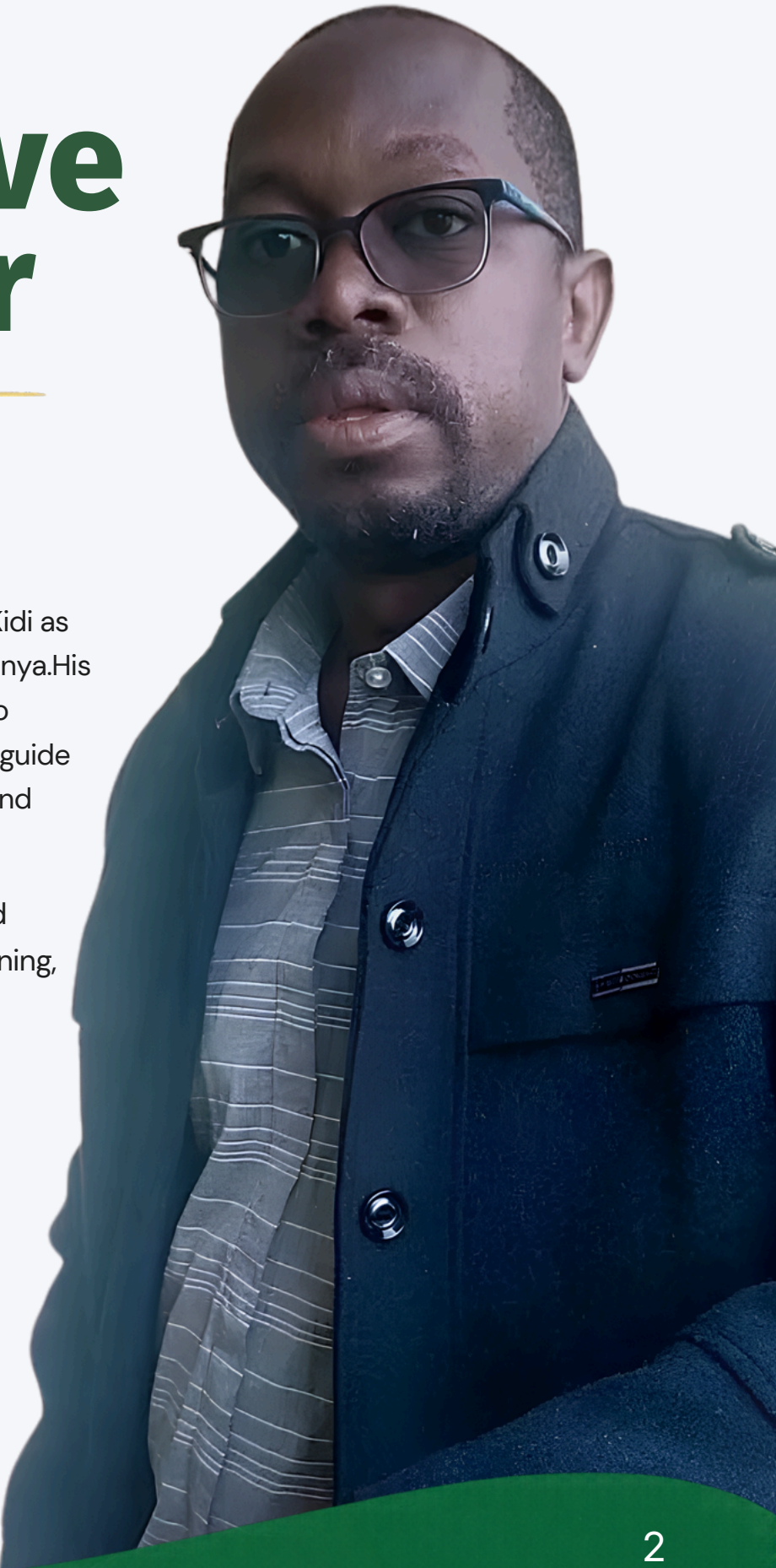
OCTOBER 2026

Together for a Greener Tomorrow

Welcome to Our New Executive Director



A new chapter of leadership, collaboration, and impact

We are delighted to welcome Moses Kidi as the new Executive Director of RODI Kenya.His experience, vision, and commitment to community led development will help guide our work toward a greener, healthier, and more inclusive future.

Together with our partners, team, and communities, we look forward to learning, growing, and creating lasting change.

Please join us in giving him a warm welcome.

> *Together, we grow stronger.*

Message from Deputy Director

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our October newsletter! This month, we celebrate the power of community, collaboration, and small actions that create big change.

Together, we have planted more than trees we have planted hope, inspired learning, and strengthened our commitment to people and the planet.

To our volunteers, partners, and community members, thank you for being the heart of this movement. Your time, ideas, and passion make our work possible.

As we look ahead, let's continue to support one another, innovate with purpose, and build a greener, more resilient future
for generations to come.

Here's to more impact, together.

Community | Collaboration | Sustainability | Impact



With gratitude,

David Nyaga

Deputy Director

> Alone we can do so little;
> together we can do so much.
> – Helen Keller

RODI Kenya Strengthens Biodiversity Conservation Through TGBS Training for Site and Nursery Attendants

Building practical skills for sustainable land restoration and biodiversity conservation

Resources Oriented Development Initiatives (RODI Kenya) continues to strengthen its commitment to environmental conservation and sustainable land restoration through capacity building for its site attendants and nursery attendants, who participated in a training session on the Global Biodiversity Standard (TGBS) at Eco-Conferencing Services.

The training brought together frontline staff involved in restoration activities, equipping them with knowledge and practical skills to better understand biodiversity conservation and its importance in restoring and protecting natural ecosystems.

Empowering the People at the Heart of Restoration

Site attendants and nursery attendants play an important role in environmental restoration. From caring for seedlings in nurseries to supporting activities at restoration sites, their daily work contributes to the growth of vegetation, the recovery of degraded landscapes and the protection of biodiversity.

Recognising the importance of their responsibilities, the training provided an opportunity for participants to deepen their understanding of biodiversity and learn how their work contributes to healthier and more resilient ecosystems.

Through the Global Biodiversity Standard, participants were introduced to the importance of considering biodiversity in restoration activities, ensuring that environmental initiatives go beyond planting trees to supporting the recovery of nature and the ecosystems that sustain life.

Understanding the Global Biodiversity Standard (TGBS)

The Global Biodiversity Standard is an initiative that promotes the protection and restoration of biodiversity by encouraging nature-based projects to consider the quality of their outcomes for the environment.

Biodiversity includes the variety of living organisms found in an area, including plants, animals, insects and microorganisms, as well as the ecosystems in which they live. Protecting this diversity is essential for maintaining healthy soils, supporting pollination, improving ecosystem resilience and sustaining the natural resources on which communities depend.

For restoration work to deliver meaningful and lasting results, it is important to consider the types of species planted, the suitability of plants to local conditions and the wider ecological value of restoration sites.

The training helped bring these principles closer to the people directly involved in nursery management and site activities, reinforcing the connection between everyday restoration practices and long-term biodiversity conservation.







From the Nursery to the Restoration Site

Nurseries are a critical starting point for successful restoration. The quality, diversity and health of seedlings can influence the success of planting activities and the ability of restored areas to support biodiversity.

Nursery attendants therefore have an important responsibility in caring for planting materials and supporting the production of healthy seedlings suited to restoration needs. Site attendants, meanwhile, contribute to activities on the ground, where careful site management and appropriate restoration practices help create conditions for vegetation to establish and ecosystems to recover.

By strengthening the knowledge of both groups, the training supported a shared understanding of the role each person plays in achieving restoration objectives.

The knowledge gained can help participants approach their responsibilities with a stronger appreciation of biodiversity, ecological balance and the importance of maintaining healthy restoration sites.

Building Capacity for Sustainable Environmental Action

At RODI Kenya, investing in staff knowledge and skills is an important part of building effective and sustainable environmental programmes. Training frontline teams helps ensure that the principles guiding conservation initiatives are understood by the people responsible for implementing activities on the ground.

The session at Eco-Conferencing Services provided an opportunity to strengthen awareness, encourage learning and reinforce the importance of incorporating biodiversity considerations into restoration work.

As environmental challenges continue to affect landscapes and communities, equipping restoration teams with the right knowledge is an important step towards improving the quality and sustainability of conservation efforts.

Looking Ahead

The TGBS training marks an important step in strengthening RODI Kenya's ongoing commitment to biodiversity conservation and sustainable land restoration. The knowledge shared during the session can support staff in applying biodiversity-conscious approaches in their daily work, from seedling care in nurseries to activities at restoration sites.

By empowering its site and nursery attendants, RODI Kenya continues to recognise that successful restoration depends not only on the activities undertaken, but also on the knowledge, commitment and practical skills of the people carrying them out.

Protecting biodiversity starts with informed action. Through continuous learning and practical engagement, RODI Kenya remains committed to supporting restoration efforts that contribute to healthier ecosystems and a more sustainable future.

How can families earn a living while protecting the forests around them?



RODI Kenya brought this question to the community during a sensitisation and public participation meeting held at Nzambani AIC Church, where residents came together to discuss sustainable livelihood opportunities that can help protect Oldonyo Sabuk Forest.

Community members shared ideas on alternative sources of income that can support families and reduce pressure on the forest.



Some of the proposed activities included:

- Beekeeping for honey production and household income.
- Dairy goat farming for milk and the sale of goat kids.
- Indigenous chicken farming for eggs, chicks and meat.
- Fruit tree planting to improve nutrition and create potential income opportunities.

Beekeeping, dairy goat farming and indigenous chicken farming attracted particular interest from participants.

The meeting was graced by Assistant Chief Mr Paul and Kenya Wildlife Service officers, including Deputy Warden Mr Osman and Officer Chomba.

The goal is to support communities in identifying sustainable livelihood opportunities that can continue beyond the project's activities in the area, while reducing pressure on the forest and its wildlife.

When communities have sustainable livelihood options, protecting nature becomes a shared responsibility and a lasting investment in the future.

A Greener Future Begins with the Actions We Take Today!

RODI Kenya is proud to launch its tree planting site at Uplands Forest in Lari, Kiambu County, marking an important milestone in our commitment to forest restoration and environmental conservation.

The launch was attended by Mr. L. W. Nyongesa, Uplands Forest Station Forester, who emphasised the importance of planting trees and caring for them to ensure long-term sustainability.



"We should not only focus on planting trees but also on nurturing and protecting them to ensure their survival and long-term sustainability. RODI Kenya's approach of caring for trees over a three-year period is important in giving them the best chance to grow and thrive," said Mr. L. W. Nyongesa, Uplands Forest Station Forester.

75,000 trees planted at the site

Since the establishment of the Uplands Forest planting site this year, 75,000 trees have been planted, marking an important milestone in RODI Kenya's commitment to forest restoration, biodiversity conservation and climate resilience.

At RODI Kenya, we recognise that tree planting is only the beginning. Restoring our forests requires patience, commitment and consistent care. By nurturing and protecting the trees throughout their early years, we aim to improve their survival and ensure they continue to benefit the environment and future generations. Together, we can restore our forests, protect our natural resources and build a greener, more sustainable Kenya.



Panda miti leo, tunza mazingira kwa kesho!

Celebrating Indigenous Seeds and Our Cultural Heritage

Preserving our seeds today means protecting our food systems for tomorrow.



RODI Kenya was proud to join fellow member organisations at the 7th Annual SAPAD Kenya Indigenous Seed and Culture Exhibition in Kathwana, Tharaka Nithi County. The event brought attention to the value of indigenous seeds, traditional farming knowledge and cultural practices that have sustained communities for generations.



Indigenous seeds are more than planting materials; they are a living part of our heritage. They preserve agricultural biodiversity, reflect generations of farming knowledge and offer communities opportunities to strengthen their resilience in the face of climate change and changing food needs.

The exhibition provided an opportunity to celebrate the knowledge and traditions that continue to shape sustainable agriculture while highlighting the importance of safeguarding indigenous seeds for future generations.

At RODI Kenya, we remain committed to promoting **agroecology, food sovereignty and sustainable agricultural practices** that empower communities to protect their natural resources, strengthen local food systems and build healthier livelihoods.

By preserving indigenous seeds and embracing traditional knowledge alongside sustainable farming practices, we can help create food systems that are diverse, resilient and rooted in our cultural heritage.

Let us preserve our seeds, protect our heritage and grow a food-secure future together!

GLS Future Foundation Visits RODI Kenya Projects in Ruiru and Nyeri

Empowering communities with skills, restoring nature and creating sustainable livelihoods.

RODI Kenya welcomed Dr. Annette Massmann and Laura from GLS Future Foundation for a visit to its projects in Ruiru and Nyeri, showcasing its work in sustainable agriculture, forest restoration and community empowerment.



At Ruiru Prison, the delegation toured coffee nurseries and vegetable gardens, learning about the agricultural technologies and sustainable farming methods promoted through RODI Kenya's training and support. The visit highlighted how practical agricultural skills can strengthen productivity and self-reliance within correctional facilities.

Through its work at Ruiru Prison, RODI Kenya has also built relationships with community members who help connect the organisation with farmers and local groups. These partnerships extend learning beyond the prison setting, creating opportunities to promote sustainable agriculture and improve livelihoods.

In Nyeri, the team visited the Nyeri Hill forest restoration project, observed trees planted approximately three years ago and joined community members in planting additional trees. The delegation also engaged with farmers using agroecological practices and sustainable technologies, including bokashi production, fish farming, dairy farming and energy-saving cookstoves. Community members shared how skills in sustainable farming and making household products such as soap and shampoo can strengthen household resilience and create additional income opportunities.

Reflecting on the visit, Dr. Annette Massmann expressed her appreciation for the work RODI Kenya is doing with farmers, people in prisons and communities. She recognised the importance of providing skills and training while supporting people to realise their potential and improve their livelihoods.

One example of this impact is Mr. Benjamin Karanja, a coffee farmer who reported an increase in coffee production from approximately 1 kg to around 5 kg per coffee bush after adopting agroecological farming methods. The visit also included a tour of a coffee processing factory in Kihuyo, where the delegation learned about the coffee value chain, from washing to drying.

RODI Kenya appreciates GLS Future Foundation for its engagement and support, alongside the farmers, prison communities and local partners working towards sustainable livelihoods and environmental conservation.

Growing Communities. Restoring Nature. Transforming Lives.

Empowering Farmers Through Agroecology Training

Building practical skills for sustainable agriculture and climate resilience.





RODI Kenya continues to strengthen farmers' capacity to adopt sustainable agricultural practices through Trainers of Trainers (ToT) training in West Pokot and Kirinyaga counties, equipping participants with practical knowledge to improve soil health, support crop production and build climate-resilient farming systems.

In West Pokot, 20 farmers participated in a ToT workshop held on 22–23 October 2026 at Manor House Agricultural Centre. The training covered agroecology principles and practical sessions on preparing bokashi, ash brew and Supermagro. These locally made agricultural inputs offer farmers affordable alternatives for improving soil fertility and supporting sustainable crop production.

In Kirinyaga County, farmer representatives under the Agroecology for Climate Resilience project received training on preparing bio-fertilisers at ROSWAM Hotel. The project targets 350 farmers, with the training aimed at strengthening practical skills and promoting agroecological practices that contribute to healthier soils and more resilient farming systems.

Through these training sessions, participants gain hands-on experience and knowledge they can apply on their farms and share with other farmers in their communities. This approach helps extend the reach of agroecology while encouraging locally driven solutions to agricultural and climate-related challenges.

By equipping farmers with practical skills and promoting knowledge sharing, RODI Kenya continues to support sustainable food production, stronger farming livelihoods and climate resilience.

Both initiatives reflect RODI Kenya's commitment to making agroecology practical, accessible and community-led. As farmers learn to prepare their own agricultural inputs and share their knowledge with others, they gain greater opportunities to improve productivity, manage farm costs and respond to climate-related challenges.

Growing knowledge. Empowering farmers. Cultivating resilience.

Through continued investment in farmer training and knowledge sharing, RODI Kenya is helping communities build more sustainable food systems and secure their agricultural livelihoods for the future.

Growing Healthier Soils: Nandi ToTs Gain Hands-On Bio-Input Skills

Building practical skills for sustainable agriculture and climate resilience.

Building practical skills for healthier soils and sustainable farming
At Kaimosi Farmers Training Centre, Nandi's Trainers of Trainers (ToTs) are gaining practical knowledge and skills to promote healthier soils and sustainable agricultural practices within their communities.
The training brought together farmer trainers for capacity building on the preparation and application of organic bio-inputs, equipping them with affordable, locally accessible solutions to improve soil health and support sustainable crop production.



From Theory to Hands-On Learning
The training combined theoretical sessions with practical demonstrations, giving participants an opportunity to learn, practice, and deepen their understanding of organic bio-input preparation. The ToTs were trained in making Bokashi, Ash Brew, and Super Magro, exploring how these bio-inputs can contribute to improved soil fertility and healthier crop growth.
Through hands-on activities, participants actively engaged in preparing the different inputs, gaining practical experience they can confidently share with other farmers. The sessions encouraged learning through participation, knowledge exchange, and the application of sustainable farming techniques.



"Through this training, I have learned how to prepare Bokashi, Ash Brew, and Super Magro using locally available materials. I now feel more confident sharing these skills with other farmers in my community."
Philip Kibet

Learning Today, Sharing Tomorrow

Beyond the training centre, the knowledge gained is expected to reach more farmers across Nandi County. The ToTs will return to their respective communities and train other farmer groups, sharing the skills and practical techniques acquired during the sessions.
By strengthening the capacity of farmer trainers, the initiative promotes farmer-to-farmer learning and encourages wider adoption of agroecological practices. It also supports farmers in exploring locally prepared bio-inputs as part of efforts to improve soil health, strengthen agricultural resilience, and build more sustainable food production systems.
Through practical learning and community knowledge-sharing, Nandi's ToTs are helping lay the foundation for healthier soils and more resilient farming communities.

Nyeri Youth Take Their Businesses Online

Young entrepreneurs in Nyeri are discovering new markets through digital marketing and branding training facilitated by RODI Kenya. Using smartphones, participants practised product photography, designed promotional posters, created sales captions and explored platforms such as WhatsApp Business, Facebook, Instagram and TikTok. They also learned essential business skills to help turn online visibility into sales.

From local markets to digital opportunities, youth are building businesses for the future.





Cooking Smart, Saving Energy in Mukurwe-ini

At Githungo Coffee Factory in Mukurwe-ini, Nyeri County, community members learned how to make and use fireless cookers using locally available materials. These energy-saving devices retain heat to continue cooking food without continuous fuel consumption, helping households save money, reduce firewood use and protect the environment.

A simple innovation for affordable cooking and a greener future.

Creativity Meets Opportunity at Nyeri Hill

Community members at Nyeri Hill are turning ordinary fabrics into colourful creations through tie-and-dye training facilitated by RODI Kenya. Participants learned practical textile-dyeing techniques, explored their creativity and discovered new opportunities for income generation. The training is helping build skills that can transform creativity into entrepreneurship and improved livelihoods.



Beyond Prison Walls: Building Skills, Restoring Hope and Creating New Opportunities

Nyanza | Rift Valley | Central | Nairobi



RODI Kenya held regional meetings bringing together Regional Commanders, Officers in Charge (OICs) of correctional institutions and RODI Kenya staff across Nyanza, Rift Valley, Central and Nairobi regions.
The meetings provided an opportunity to review programme achievements, strengthen partnerships and showcase the impact of rehabilitation and skills development initiatives in correctional facilities.

Skills That Create Opportunities

RODI Kenya staff showcased practical activities undertaken within prisons, including agroecological farming, soap making and value addition, such as yoghurt production. The demonstrations highlighted how inmates are acquiring practical skills in sustainable agriculture, production and entrepreneurship to support their livelihoods beyond incarceration.
Regional Commanders and prison officers also shared experiences on the programme's impact, highlighting positive changes among inmates, participation in agricultural exhibitions and Correctional Service Week, as well as successful reintegration stories.
The discussions further explored opportunities to strengthen training through improved learning materials, addressing water challenges and expanding livelihood activities within correctional institutions.

A TESTIMONIAL THAT SPEAKS ACROSS GENERATIONS

"The skills remain useful over the years." Ms. Anne Gatimu, Regional Commander for Central Region, recalled first encountering RODI Kenya's soap-making training in 2005 at Nyeri Women Prison. She later applied the knowledge during COVID-19 hygiene awareness and training activities evidence that practical learning can continue to benefit communities.



Every skill learned represents a possibility. Every opportunity creates hope.

FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE: THE SHIFT PRACTITIONERS NEED IN AGROECOLOGY, FOOD SYSTEMS AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE.



For over 30 years, agro-ecology practitioners have been very good at theory, approaches, principles. To the best, we have theories and approaches of sustainable agriculture, agroecology, food systems, climate smart agriculture, climate resilience, with additional frameworks, pillars, principles, toolkits and manuals.

We have held conferences about agroecology while farmers practice agroecology outside the conference hall. We have written papers about resilience while farmers are already resilient without reading our papers.

The problem is not that we lack theory. The problem is that theory has not moved to practice, learning from what farms have practiced before and the good approaches documented on the manuals, PowerPoint slides, and conference talks do not reach the farmers in practice.

And if we are serious about the future, especially now when funding is shrinking and communities must own their food systems, practitioners need to make 7 hard shifts.

1. FROM TEACHING AGROECOLOGY TO LIVING AGROECOLOGY

Theory says: Agroecology has 13 principles. Practice asks: Does your own organization practice them?

Too many NGOs teach agroecology but practice conventionally: they very well teach about diversification, seed saving and seed sovereignty, soil health, among other sustainable approaches but their own demonstration farms are dead after project ends, the farmers are have known this long enough.

Practitioners must stop being teachers of agroecology and become practitioners of agroecology. Your office should eat from your farmers who are practicing agro-ecology. Your field staff should have their own kitchen gardens, farms practising agro-ecology. If we don't live it, farmers know we are just selling another project.

2. FROM PROJECTS TO FOOD SYSTEMS

Theory says: We have a 2-year food security project. Practice knows: Food security is not a project. It is a system.

A project gives seeds. A food system asks: Where will seeds come from next year? Where will food be stored? Who controls the storage? How will it be shared? How will it be processed? Who sets the price?

Resources Oriented Development Initiatives-RODI has learned and is walking the talk: You can train 500 farmers on agroecology, but if they still have to sell beans to a broker at Kshs 80 and buy back at Kshs 150, you have not changed the food system. You have only created trained, poor farmers.

Let's stop designing projects. Start mapping and building systems:

- Seed system: Community seed bank + seed savers + seed fairs, not seed distribution.
- Soil system: Composting, manure, biofertilizers produced locally, not fertilizer promotion.
- Water system: Catchment conservation+ water harvesting + storage + governance, not just one borehole.
- Market system: Farmer owned collection, processing, collective marketing not just linking to exploitative markets.

If your work ends when your project ends, you were doing a project. If it continues after you leave, you were building a system.

3. FROM CLIMATE TALK TO CLIMATE WORK

Theory says: Climate change is a global crisis. Practice says: For a farmer in Laikipia county, climate change is theory. It is rain that no longer comes in March.

We have climate-resilient theories but we still tell farmers to plant hybrid and GMO maize, use chemical fertilisers and pesticides, because we need to feed the nation, the world.

Climate resilience is not a theory manual on climate change mitigation strategies. It is practical work on mitigation, farmers taking lead, sharing their indigenous knowledge and building systems for climate resilience. To achieve the true practice, we need:

- Re-learning seasons: Elders know rains have shifted. Let them lead the planting calendar, not the meteorological department alone.
- Re-building soil that holds water: One inch of compost holds 20,000 litres of water per acre. That's resilience. Not a climate resilience policy statement.
- Re-introducing crops that tolerate drought and are pest resilience: Sorghum, millet, cassava, cowpeas, pigeon peas, local vegetables and not pushing maize everywhere.
- Re-storing food: Every community needs 6 months of stored food. That's resilience. Not a resilience index.
- Stop training farmers about climate change. Work with them to farm differently because climate has changed.

4. FROM TRAINING FARMERS TO ACCOMPANYING FARMERS

Theory loves trainings. One day, three day, five day. Attendance sheet, per diem and certificate. Practice knows training doesn't change practice.

No farmer adopted agroecology because she attended a 2-day training. She adopted it because someone walked with her for two seasons, in her farm, during planting, during weeding, during harvest, during storage and marketing

To achieve great adoption and sustainability, lets reduce theory trainings by 70%. Increase practical's and accompaniment by 70%.

- Instead of training 1,500 farmers once, accompany 150 farmers for 10 times.
- In addition to training and visiting the farmer once a month, engage a farmer mentor who lives in the community, whom they can walk the journey for many years.
- Instead of ending after training, start after training. The training is not the work. The follow-up is the work, it builds trust, unlocks potential and builds resilience. Its practice

5. FROM DEMO PLOTS TO REAL FARMS

Theory says: Let's do a demonstration plot. Practice says: Farmers don't eat at the demonstration plot. They eat at home. Demonstration plots fail because they are too perfect: just reflect on their perfect spacing, perfect compost from NGO, perfect watering. Farmers look and say, "That is for NGO, not for me. I don't have that water, that labour, that hybrid seed, that drip irrigation, among other investment."
Let's move from demonstration plots to real farms. Pick 10 real farms- small, stony, with real constraints. Transform them with the farmer, using her resources. Let neighbours see real change on real farms, not NGO farms.
Real farms convince. Demonstration plots just impress.

6. FROM BENEFICIARIES TO OWNERS OF KNOWLEDGE

Theory says: We are disseminating knowledge. Practice says: Communities already have knowledge. You just haven't asked. The most resilient food systems in Kenya were not designed by NGOs. They were designed by grandmothers who knew how to mix 12 different types crops in half an acre to survive drought. That's diversification and resilience

Practitioners must move from being knowledge givers to knowledge facilitators:

- Document farmers' own agroecology practices before introducing new ones.
- Create farmer-to-farmer learning, not NGO-to-farmer teaching.
- Let a farmer who has kept seeds for 15 years teach the extension officer, not the other way round.
- Community seed banks should be managed by farmers, not by project staff.
- Communities know what works. Our job is not to bring theory to them. Our job is to help their practice become visible, valued, and scaled.



7. FROM MEASURING REACH TO MEASURING ROOTING

Theory measures: How many farmers reached? How many trainings done? How many varieties of seeds distributed? Practice should measure:

- How many farmers are still saving seeds 3 years after we left?
- How many households have 6 months of stored food?
- How many community seed banks are still functioning without us?
- How many children eat diversified food from their own farm daily?

We need to change our measurements from reach to rooting. If it doesn't root, it was never resilient. We need change measurements driven by farmers not NGOs

THE PRACTITIONER WE NEED NOW

The era of the saviour is eroding. Funding is shrinking. Rations are cut. The big INGO will leave.
The era of the practitioner who lives agroecology, builds systems, accompanies farmers, learns from elders, and measures rooting that era is beginning.

We don't need more theory. We have enough theory to feed Africa. We need practitioners who will get off the PowerPoint and into the farm. Who will get off the workshop allowance and into the soil.

At Resources Oriented Development Initiatives (RODI) Kenya, we have reflected on our 36-year journey of existence and accompanying farmers and our key reflections every day are:

- Are we still teaching agroecology, or are we practicing it?

- Are we doing projects, or are we building food systems that will survive us?

That shift from theory to practice is not technical. It is moral. And it is urgent.

By David Nyaga
Deputy Director

Gallery

OCTOBER



West pokot group visit



west pokot TOT training



Dr. Annette at ruiru prison demo garden



Benjamin at his farm demonstrating the change



Nzambani community



Youth planting a tree at Nyeri hill

Gallery

OCTOBER



TGBS training



ED Moses Kidi planting a Tree at Nyeri hill



Gls team at Nyeri hill



Tharaka nithi seed fair



Tharaka nithi seed fair

RODI Kenya

Resources Oriented Development Initiatives

Thank You!

Thank you for being part of our journey towards sustainable livelihoods and resilient communities.

See you in our next edition!
— Stay connected and keep growing.

OCTOBER NEWSLETTER 2026

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