

Ileho Community Centre for Social Services

Seeking Advisors for Organic Farming Initiative in Rural Western Kenya



Dear Well-wishers,

May I take this precious opportunity to welcome you to Ileho Community Centre for Social Services (ICCSS).

ICCSS was founded in response to the severe poverty conditions threatening more than 54,000 people in a division of Kakamega District of western Kenya which has close to 700,000 people. We have high illiteracy and unemployment rates and 52% of the population is living below poverty line. Agriculture provides approximately 75% of the employment in Kenya. Western Kenya is a highly potential region in rain fed agriculture with only one unutilized dry season between December and early March every year. 80% of this is poorly performing subsistence agriculture without diversification. ICCSS, the only grass roots social and human development agency in Ileho took up the challenge to initiate and enforce agriculture in a region whose agricultural underproduction results in low farm wages estimated at 1 \$ US dollar per person, per day. There are limited opportunities outside agriculture, which offers 80% of rural occupation in the region. Subsistence agriculture remains the basic economic activity in Ileho; a region that also registers great numbers of HIV/AIDS orphans. ICCSS therefore finds organic farming the only affordable solution for the basic sustainable economic development in the region.

For ICCSS, investing in organic farming provides women and youth who do not own land with an opportunity to participate in the community agricultural production. It also builds personal economic development. The project has captured over 10,000 interested potential small scale land owners. As the only commercial economy of the subsistence agriculture, organic farming also provides nutrition for the community including HIV/AIDS orphans and the aged as well as

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basic social security for the needy. The needy value organic farming just as the developed people value bank deposits and other financial investments.

It is in this context that we began and continue our journey to seek and develop relationships in support of organic farming in rural western Kenya. We greatly appreciate any kind of assistance ranging from advice on organic pesticides and fertilizer to any other technical support.

Experts and non-professionals interested in spending some of their time working on organic farming in rural Africa are most welcome. ICCSS will host your stay with a family if you would like to enjoy the real rural culture and experience in Africa. We have a safe and wonderful family network if you would like to tour Kenya and stay with families as far as the coast of Kenya. We take seriously the desire of our guests to tour Kenya and we consider this as part of our visitors' life and work at ICCSS. For more information read articles on our webpage which begin at cydabatt.com/ICCSS.html You can also contact me via cell phone or email (011-254-7-24-675762 & mmbali7@yahoo.com), or contact our US technical consultant Cynthia Abatt in Cambridge, MA (617-875-8766 & cydabatt@yahoo.com). We look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,
Oscar Siema Mmbali
Director, ICCSS