

Grinder Training Workshop in Kenya

In early 2009, long-time CTI volunteer Kathleen Graham was invited by the Nairobi-based International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) to bring her Ewing Grinder Pilot Project to farmers in far western Kenya. Excited about the opportunity to test the Ewing III grinder in Kenya and with a variety of crops, Kathleen traveled to Homa Bay on the shores of Lake Victoria with six grinders provided by the Graham Service Fund. There, she worked with ICRISAT's collaborator from the Kenya Ministry of Research, Mrs. Nasambu Okoko, a manager of the Kisii branch of the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) to conduct a grinder training workshop. Participants in this two-day workshop included representatives from farmers' cooperatives in neighboring districts and local agents of the Ministry of Agriculture.



CTI's goals in this Pilot Project are to discover the acceptability of the Ewing III grinder among Kenyan farmers who are seeking to add value to their crops and to learn whether this grinder is useful in processing the crops of far Western Kenya: millet, sorghum, soybeans, cow peas, and "green gram" (which looks like a small mung bean). Mrs. Okoko noted that the introduction of ground nuts (peanuts) to this area is recent, and the participants were curious and enthusiastic about the production of nut paste, which is the Ewing grinder's most common use. While nut paste is a staple in Uganda and Southern Sudan, it is a new product in much of rural Kenya. The participants reported they had recently seen nut paste introduced in local markets and were keen to add it to their own income-generating activities.



The three primary objectives of the workshop, held at the Homa Bay Agricultural Training Center, were to make all workshop participants Ewing grinder "experts," to prepare all workshop participants to comfortably train others to use the grinder, and to teach workshop participants who received a grinder how to incorporate it into their communities for labor-saving and/or income-generating purposes. All participants demonstrated proficiency at basic grinder assembly, processing several crops, disassembly and cleaning the machine.

In addition to grinder training, Kathleen instructed participants on some basics of food processing, nutrition, hygiene, and record keeping.