

Capacity Building Program (2020-2022)

The new Capacity Building Program aims at empowering community members to become active drivers of change in the Chepchoina community and to become more involved in the projects at Mount Elgon Trust. It teaches skills for community development, poverty reduction, human rights activism and project management.

The program strives to enable sustainable development by empowering people through education to see their own potential, to use available resources efficiently, and to build on the skills and knowledge they already have. The training works to tackle a culture of dependency, by inspiring dignity, self-belief and motivation in the community.

Over three-years, 180 community members from 30 villages within Chepchoina will undergo training. The participants are trained to be trainers, so that the skills and knowledge gained will be shared into the community. It is estimated that each participant will train 5 people in their village.

The first group of 30 community members began training last month. The engagement, effort and motivation shown by the participants was remarkable. For the first time, the community members felt seen and heard. They had a platform to openly discuss the challenges they face, and work with the trainers and Mount Elgon Trust team to see a way forward. After five days of training there was a noticeable change in self-confidence and commitment. The feedback given was extremely positive:

“Many people will benefit from this training, it will enlighten the community and people will have a better understanding of their rights and ability”

“The first workshop was very good for me because I learned everything is possible when it is acted on”

“Before the training I did not have courage, now I have courage”

“I feel empowered”

The program acts as a bridge between the Trust management team and the community. It allows for greater connection, understanding and collaboration. Throughout and after training the Trust team is committed to assisting the community members with their own development processes and involving them in our projects.

Since the first training, participants have already been involved in our work. During October, the Trust team conducted child malnutrition screening in the surrounding villages. The participants from the selected areas assisted in the organisation of the visit and actively took part in the exercise. This new-found partnership confirmed the importance and impact of the Capacity Building Program.

As the program manager, I feel very passionate about the community training. The first training exceeded all my expectations. There is a lot of excitement and hope felt around this program by myself, the facilitators and the community. I look forward to seeing the work we will do together in the coming years.

Hannah Sawyer-Kerr
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