

Different Cultures, Different Farms

**Youth and Agriculture in
Kenya and Prince Edward Island, Canada**

An information kit prepared by
The Farm Children's Voices Project
to complement the
Prince Edward Island Grade 8 Geography Program

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The support of
The Prince Edward Island 4-H Council,
The International Family Farm Exchange Association
The Partners for Children Fund, Health and Welfare Canada,
The Kenyan National Farmers Union,
The Young Farmers Clubs of Kenya
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Introduction and Information to Teachers

Information on the Farm Children's Voices Project

The Farm Children's Voices project took place from 1993 to 1994. Eleven young people from Prince Edward Island went to Kenya for a month in July to learn about Kenya, Kenyan farms and Kenyan youth. Ten young people from Kenya came to Prince Edward Island in August to learn the same things about Canada. For approximately ten months prior to the exchanges, the youths undertook an extensive education and orientation program to prepare them for the adventure.

Farmers Helping Farmers, officially the International Family Farm Exchange Association, was the principal sponsor for the Farm Children's Voices project. They are a Prince Edward Island group devoted to learning more about farming conditions in developing countries, and assisting farmers in developing countries, particularly Kenya and Tanzania, with local level, highly practical self-help projects. To accomplish this they carry out a unique type of farmer to farmer international exchange project and interaction. Farmers Helping Farmers identified a need to involve youth in their activities and thus developed an exchange and activity project utilizing members' skills and backgrounds.

The Farm Children's Voices Project was approved and funded by the Partners for Children Fund, Children's Bureau of Health and Welfare Canada. There were a number of partnerships and collaborations established to manage, sponsor and direct the project. In Canada, Farmers Helping Farmers, the Prince Edward Island Department of Education and Human Resources and the Prince Edward Island 4-H Council were project partners. In Kenya, the Kenya National Farmers Union, the Young Farmers Clubs of Kenya and the Kenya Ministry of Education were project partners.

One of the main purposes of the exchange was to provide young people with an opportunity to educate themselves on issues in P.E.I. and Kenya that affect the family farm and food production, as well as on environmental and gender issues related to farming. The overall goal was "to develop and illustrate an international co-operative process which will empower farm youth to effectively voice opinions on global issues which will influence their well-being".

The young people taking part in the project were asked to pay special attention to four important areas:

- finding out about farm children at risk,
- looking for inequalities in agriculture in both countries,
- examining male/female (gender) differences and inequalities in farm work in both countries,

- finding out how world wide issues affect life on farms in different places in the world.

In addition to the actual exchange activity, the project had the responsibility for developing a series of outputs or additional materials in an effort to extend and expand the experiences of the exchange members to a wider audience. The youth exchange participants had control, direction and creative responsibility for the output materials. They were assisted by a variety of professional advisors and support personnel, but the final decisions with regard to the this Grade 8 material and other outputs remained theirs. They hope that this approach helps to make the information valuable to the groups who will use it.

"We (the exchange youths) wanted to spread what we learned to other young people so we did some projects, including this one. We have also:

- *made a video of our exchange and the things we learned and saw,*
- *organized a slide set to show people what we did and what we learned,*
- *prepared some booklets about world agriculture for use in Young Farmers Clubs of Kenya,*
- *created a world agriculture awareness project for 4-H members,*
- *put together fact sheets and information for use in schools in Kenya."*