Published on *Kitchen Gardeners International* (http://kgi.org)

And the survey says....

Mon, 05/03/2010 - 10:58 -- Roger Doiron

In a survey launched in the beginning of April, Kitchen Gardeners International asked its members to respond to a series of 10 questions regarding food gardening in their area. The goal of the survey was to help inform the work that KGI is doing in partnership with like-minded groups in other parts of the world [1]. The responses were enlightening.

Overall, members indicated a strong need for funding, information/knowledge, skilled staff, and seeds in order to further promote food gardening in their area. These needs are especially strong from international members in developing countries.

Another major theme in the survey was a consistency of efforts to promote vegetable growing. People in the survey mentioned demonstration gardens, youth education, seed saving, community education, networking and outreach to their region as methods used right now.

In regards to what a partnership with KGI means, and how it can serve members, responses indicate that most people feel the organization should serve to help network, provide information, and occasional funding. People in both developed and developing countries indicated that they would like to find camaraderie in other members, broaden their personal knowledge, and simply share their experiences.

A more detailed summary of our findings can be found below. The survey was not only interesting for the questions it helped answer, but all the new ones it leads us to ask, such as:

- What are the challenges faced related to kitchen gardening in these countries, and what are the opportunities to encourage more vegetable growing?
- Are there similarities between regions?
- Which of these methods works best? Which don't?
- Are there methods of promotion that can be used in all areas?
- How else can KGI provide for its members?
- How can information be shared with members who don't have internet access at all hours of the day?
- In light of the barriers mentioned, how can a partnership help overcome these obstacles?

We're inviting members of the KGI community to offer their own answers to the questions above and to pose some questions of their own through a 3-part, 3-day discussion taking place in our online forums this week. We hope you can join us (Part 1 [2], Part 2 [3], Part 3 [4])and contribute some thoughts and

experiences from your geographic perspective.

Many thanks to Helena Kopczynski, our intern-extraordinaire from Antioch University, and KGI board member, Jan Maes, for their hard work and leadership in coaxing this survey to fruition.

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Survey Results

A brief survey was provided to the current members of KGI asking questions about garden projects undertaken. Questions asked included whether a person represented a group, what types of garden promotion projects they have undertaken, what the barriers to gardening were in their country, what their motivations were, what they sought to get from working with KGI, and what they sought to provide other KGI members. Of 92 early respondents 24 were from countries considered ?developing,? of the Global South. Countries included Thailand, Bali, Pakistan, India, Portugal, Kenya, Israel, Brazil, Mexico, Eriteria, South Africa, Cameroon, Argentina, and Barbados. The country most represented was India, followed by Pakistan. Nonetheless, the group included a broad range of individuals and ecosystems.

Trends in the answers reveal that most people ? 12 of the 24 ? represented current organizations. One person listed ?Family,? 6 listed Individual and 4 listed Community. Organization missions included a wide range of projects from sustainable agriculture, organic farming, networking, permaculture, skill training, pollution and carbon reduction, urban agriculture, rural issues, HIV/AIDS and health, school gardens, poverty alleviation, conservation, soil health, indigenous rights, and woman's rights. No one goal dominated. When it came types of projects to promote gardening, respondents indicated a large degree of action in demonstration gardens, youth education, seed saving, community education, networking and outreach to groups in their respective regions. Youth Education and Demonstration Gardens was indicated 11 times, and Community Education 13 times, Seed Saving 12 times, and Networking and Regional Outreach 10 times. What is striking about these answers is the highly localized activity level. Question 4 asked for specific barriers to gardening, and here the answers highlighted a need for funding, seeds, and information. A majority of people responded that Funds ? 16 in all - were a major barrier to gardening. The next issue was Information/Knowledge with 11, and Availability of seed with 10. Next, the concerns ranged in numbers for Time with 7, and Skilled Staff with 8, Interest from Community Members and access to supplies with 6 each. When it came to whether people have worked with an international group before, the vast majority indicated ?No,? which would seem to reflect the lack of projects involving grant application and global outreach.

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