

# Raising awareness and bringing actors together during the Ethiopian Soil Campaign

December 2 2015

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On the occasion of the FAO International Year of Soils in 2015, the Ethiopian Soil Campaign has been organized to raise awareness and collaboration for healthy soils and healthy lives in Ethiopia. Throughout the year, various activities and events are organized at several locations in Ethiopia. One of the most important events, the Ethiopian Soil Week, took place last week. The Fertile Grounds Initiative played a significant

role during this week by hosting a workshop for soil professionals and a field day in Ziway.

The Fertile Grounds Initiative (FGI) aims to bring together various sources of organic and [mineral nutrients](#) via a matchmaking process to improve [food security](#) and reduce wastes. Ziway is one of the pilot studies in Ethiopia where FGI works on a proof-of-concept together with the composting company Soil&More Ethiopia. Every week, Soil&More collects 100 trucks of rose leaves, stems and wood stocks from the floriculture sector and produces compost from these organic residues. The compost is provided back to the floriculture sector and smallholder farmers in the area. FGI supports Soil&More in assessing the chemical quality of the compost and its impact on soil nutrient status, soil structure, crop yields and farm income.

During the field day, farmers, soil professionals and students were able to visit the composting site of Soil&More to learn more about professional compost production. FGI gave an interactive presentation with a 'nutrient balance', whereby the one side of the balance represented the city as an area of nutrient accumulation, and whereby the other side of the balance represent the countryside as an area of nutrient depletion. Firstly, the participants received a banana and were asked to put the peel at the 'city-accumulation' side of the scale whereby the nutrient balance tilted to the city side. Next, the participants could put a hand full of compost to the 'rural-depletion' side to bring nutrients back to the soils and to restore the nutrient balance. Through this demonstration, awareness about the Fertile Grounds Initiative was created among a diverse audience.

The Fertile Grounds Initiative is expected to make a significant practical contribution to sustainable development in areas with limited [soil](#) fertility and nutrient availability, while at the same time resolving problems arising from [nutrient](#) excess in certain parts of the world and

from (urban) waste streams, turning these into economic assets. During the next months, the pilot studies in Ethiopia will be further developed and can serve as an example to (Ethiopian) actors working on agriculture and waste management.

Provided by Wageningen University

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